

INSTRUC^{TION}
BY
MRS IN THE N
OF TUNBRIDGE WEL
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JOSHUA WILSON Esq
DISCIPLINE
OF THE
CHURCHES
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT,
BY WAY OF
Question and Answer.
With an Explication and Confirma-
tion of those ANSWERS.

By *John Owen*, D. D.

London, Printed and are to be Sold by *William*
Marshall, at the *Bible* in *Newgate-street*, 1688.

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A

BRIEF INSTRUCTION IN

The Worship of God, &c.

Q. 1. **W** *Hat doth God require of us in our dependance on him, that he may be glorified by us, and we accepted with him?*

Ans. That we (a) Worship him (b) in and by the ways of his own appointment. (a) Matth. 4. 10. Rev. 14. 7. Deut. 6. 13. chap. 10. 20. (b) Lev. 10. 1, 2, 3. Exod. 24. 3. Gen. 18. 19. Josh. 23. 6. 8. Zash. 14. 16.

Explication.

By the *Worship* of God enquired after, not that which is *natural* or *moral*, which

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is

is required in the first Commandment is intended. Such is our faith and confidence in him, our fear of him, our subjection of soul and conscience unto him, as the great Sovereign Lord, first cause, last end, Judge and Rewarder of all men; the Law whereof was originally written in the heart of Man, and hath been variously improved and directed by new Revelations and Institutions. And this Worship is called *Natural*, upon a double account.

First, Because it depends on the *Nature* of God, a due perception and understanding whereof, makes all this Worship indispensibly necessary: for none can know God, but it is his duty to glorify him as God; that is, to believe in him, love him, trust him, and call upon him; which all are therefore *curst* that do not. *Psal.* 79. 6. *2 Thess.* 1. 8.

And, Secondly, Because it was in the principle of it concreated with the *nature* of man, as that which suited, directed, and enabled him to answer the Law of his Creation, requiring this obedience of him in his dependance on God. And this Worship is *invariable*: but it concerneth those *outward ways* and means whereby God hath appointed that faith, and love, and fear of him to be exercised and expressed unto his glory.

glory. And this kind of *Worship*, though it depend not upon the *Nature of God*, but upon his free and arbitrary disposal, and so was of old liable unto alterations; yet God did ever strictly require in the several states and conditions that his Church hath gone through in the world. And this is that which most commonly in the Scripture is called by the name of the *worship of God*; as that whereby all the acceptable actings of the souls of men towards him are express'd, and the only way of owning and acknowledging him in the world, as also of entertaining a visible intercourse with him. This therefore he calls for, & requires indispensibly of all that draw nigh to him, and that because he is *the Lord our God*, *Rev.* 14. 6, 7. *Mat.* 4. 10. *Deut.* 10. 12, 13. For his observance hereof, doth he so approve of *Abraham*, *Gen.* 18. 19. and sets it down as an everlasting law unto all others, that in a holy observation thereof, *he will be sanctified in all that draw nigh unto him.* *Lev.* 10. 1, 2, 3. His commands also concerning it are multiplied in the Scripture, with the approbation of all those that attend unto them. We may not think to find acceptance with God, or to inherit the promises, if supposing our selves to adhere unto him in *Worship internal and natural*, we neglect that which is

external, and of his free appointment : for besides, that we renounce thereby our inward dependance on him also, in not observing his commands, as *Adam* did in transgressing an *Institution*, we become wholly useless unto all the ends of his glory in the world, which is not the way to come to an enjoyment of him. Neither do we only express and profess our inward *moral natural worship* of God hereby, by which means it becomes the principal way and instrument of faith and trust, exerting themselves in our obedience ; but also it is a most effectual *help* and assistance unto the principle of that natural worship, strengthening the *habit* of it, and *exciting* it unto all suitable *actings*, unto its encrease and growth.

Qu. 2. *By what means do we come to know that God will thus be worshipped?*

Ans. That God is to be worshipped, and that according to his own will and appointment, is a (a) principal branch of the Law of our Creation, written in our hearts ; the (b) sense whereof is renewed in the second Commandment ; but the ways and means of that worship depend meerly on God's (c) Sovereign Pleasure and Institution. (d) Rom. 1. 21. chap. 2.

14, 15. Acts 15. 16, 17. Act. 17. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 *verses.* (b) Exod. 20. 4, 5, 6. (c) Jer. 7. 31. Exod. 25. 40. Heb. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Joh. 1. 18.

Explication.

These two things all men saw by nature.

First, That God, however they mistook in their apprehensions of him, would be and was to be worshipped with some *outward solemn* Worship. So that although some are reported to have even cast off all knowledge and sense of a *Divine Being*, yet never any were heard of, that came to an acknowledgement of any God, true or false, but they all consented, that he was constantly and solemnly to be worshipped. And that not only by *individual Persons*, but by *Societies* together, that so they might own and honour him whom they took for their God. And thus far outward Worship is required in the first Commandment; namely, that the inward be exercised and expressed. When we take God for our God, we take him to worship him, *Dent.* 10. 12, 13. Other thoughts, namely of *inward* Worship, without *outward* expression at all, or any time, or in any way, are but a covert unto *Atheism*. And,

Secondly, This also they were led to an apprehension of, by the same light whereby they are a *Law unto themselves*, Rom. 2. 14. that God would be worshipped in the *way*, and by the *means* that he himself appointed and approved; whence none among the *Heathen* themselves undertook to appoint ways and *Ceremonies* of Worship, but still they pretended to derive the knowledge of them from the *Gods themselves*, of whom they reckoned that every one would be worshipped in his own way. And because notwithstanding this pretence, being left of God, and deluded of *Satan*, they did invent false and foolish ways of Worship, not only not appointed of God, but such as were unsuited unto those *inbred notions* which they had of his nature and excellencies, the Apostle convinces and disproves them, as men acting against the *Light of nature*, and Principles of Reason, Rom. 1. 21. they might have seen, *that*, in their Idolatry they answered not their own inbred conceptions of the *Divine Power and Godhead*, so as to glorifie him as God. And in the like manner doth he argue at large, *Act*. 17. 23. But beyond this, the *inbred light of nature* could not conduct any of the Sons of men. This alone is contained in the first Precept. That God was

to be worshipped they knew, and that he was to be worshipped by ways and means of his own appointment they knew; but what those ways and means were, they knew not. These always depended on Gods soveraign will and pleasure, and he made them known to whom he pleased, *Psal.* 147. 19, 20. And although some of the ways which he doth appoint, may seem to have a great compliance in them unto the *light of nature*, yet in his worship he accepts them not on that account; but meerly on that of his own institution. And this as he hath declared his will about in the second Commandment; so he hath severely forbidden the *addition* of our own inventions unto what he hath appointed: sending us for instruction unto him alone, whom he hath endowed with *Soveraign Authority* to reveal his will, and ordain his worship, *John* 1. 18. *Mat.* 17 5. *1 Chron.* 16. 13.

Qⁿ. 3. How then are these ways and means of the Worship of God made known unto us?

Ans. In and by the written *Word* only; which contains a full & perfect Revelation of the *Will* of God; as to his whole *Worship*, and all the concernments of it: *Joh.* 5. 39. *Ia.* 8. 20. *Luk.* 16. 19. 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17.

1 Pet. 1. 19. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Josh. 1. 7.
Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 20. Isa. 29. 13.

Explication.

The *End* wherefore God granted his Word unto the Church, was, that thereby it might be instructed in his mind and will, as to what concerns the worship and obedience that he requireth of us, and which is accepted with him. This the whole Scripture it self every where declares and speaks out unto all that do receive it; as 2 *Tim.* 3. 15, 16, 17. with the residue of the testimonies above recited, do declare. It supposeth, it declareth, that of our selves we are ignorant how God is, how he ought to be worshipped, *Isa.* 8. 20. Moreover it manifests him to be a jealous God, exercising that holy property of his nature in an especial manner about his Worship, rejecting and despising every thing that is not according to his will, that is not of his Institution, *Exod.* 20. 4, 5.

That we may know what is so, he hath made a Revelation of his mind and will in his *written Word*, that is, the *Scripture*. And to the end that we might expect instruction from thence alone in his Worship, and act therein accordingly.

First,

7. *First, He sends us and directs us thereunto, expressly for that purpose, Isa. 8. 28. Luk. 16. 19. Joh. 5. 39. and not once intimates in the least, any other way or means of instruction unto that end.*

Secondly, He frequently affirms, that it is sufficient, able, and perfect to guide us therein, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. 1 Pet. 1. 19. Psal. 19. 7, 8, 9. And whereas he hath expressly given it unto us for that end, if there be any want or defect therein, it must arise from hence, that either God would not, or could not give unto us a perfect Revelation of his will; neither of which can be imagined.

Thirdly, He hath commanded us to observe all whatsoever he hath appointed therein, and not to make any addition thereunto, Josh. 1. 7. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Prov. 30. 6. Rev. 22. 20. And,

Fourthly, Peculiarly interdicted us the use of any such things as are of the institution or appointment of Men, Isa. 29. 13, 14. So that from the Scriptures alone, are we to learn what is accepted with God in his worship.

Qu. 4. Have these ways and means been always the same from the beginning?

Ans. No! But God hath altered and changed them at sundry seasons, according to

to the counsel of his own will, so as he saw necessary for his own Glory, and the Edification of his Church. See Gen. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 17. 10, 11. Exod. 12. 3, 4, 5. Exod. 20. Chap. 23. 9. Heb. 1. 1. Heb. 9. 10, 11, 12.

Explication.

The *external* Worship whereof we speak, being as was shewed before, not *natural* or moral, arising necessarily from the dependence of the rational Creature on God, as its first Cause, chiefest Good, last End, and Sovereign Lord, but proceeding from the meer will and pleasure of God, determining how he will be honoured and glorified in the world, was always *alterable* by him, by whom it was appointed. And whereas ever since the entrance of sin into the World, God had always respect unto the promise of the Lord Christ, and his mediation, in whom alone he will be glorified, and faith in whom he aimed to begin and increase in all his Worship, he hath suited his Institutions of the means thereof, to that dispensation of Light and Knowledge of him, which he was pleased at any time to grant. Thus immediately after the giving of the *Promise*, he appointed *Sacrifices* for the great means of his

his Worship ; as to glorifie himself expressly by Mens offering unto him of the principal good things which he had given them, so to instruct them in the Faith, and confirm them in the Expectation of the *Great Sacrifice* for Sin, that was to be offered by the promised Seed, *Gen.4.3,4. Heb.11.4.* These were the first instituted Worship of God in the world after the entrance of sin. Hereunto he nextly added *Circumcision*, as an express sign of the Covenant, with the grace of it, which he called *Abraham* and his Seed unto, by Jesus Christ, *Gen.17.10,11.* And to the same general end and purpose, he afterwards super-added the *Passover* with its attendant institutions, *Exod.12.23.24.* And then the whole Law of institutions contained in Ordinances, by the Ministry of Angels on Mount *Sinai*, *Exod.20.* So by sundry degrees he built up that fabrick of his *outward Worship*, which was suited in his infinite wisdom unto his own glory, and the edification of his Church, until the exhibition of the promised Seed, or the coming of Christ in the flesh, and the accomplishment of the work of his mediation, *Heb.1.1.* for unto that season were those Ordinances to serve, and no longer, *Heb.9.10,11,12.* And then were they removed by the same authority where-

whereby they were instituted and appointed, *Col. 2. 14, 18, 19, 20.* So that though God would never allow, that Men, upon what pretence soever, should make any alteration in the Worship appointed by him, by adding unto it any thing of their own, or omitting ought that he had commanded, either in matter or manner, notwithstanding that he knew that it was to abide but for a season, but commanded all men straitly to attend to the observation of it, whilst it was by him continued in force, *Mal. 4. 4.* yet he always reserved unto himself the sovereign Power of altering, changing, or utterly abolishing it at his own pleasure: Which authority he exerted in the Gospel as to all the meer institutions of the Old Testament. Whilst they continued, he enforced them with *moral* reasons, as his own Holiness and Authority; but those reasons prove not any of those institutions to be *moral*, unless they ensue upon those reasons alone, and are no where else commanded: for being once instituted and commanded, they are to be enforced with *moral* considerations, taken from the Nature of God, and our Duty, in reference unto his Authority. So, saith he, *Thou shalt reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord,* which no more proves that a *moral* Duty, than that enjoyed

enjoyed upon the same foundation, *Levit.*

11.44. I am the Lord your God, ye shall therefore sanctifie your selves, & ye shall be holy, for I am holy, neither shall ye defile your selves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the Earth. Not defiling our selves with the touching or eating of creeping things, is now no moral Duty, since the institution is ceased, although it be enforced by many moral considerations.

Qu. 5. Is there any farther alteration to be expected in or of those Institutions and Ordinances of Worship, which are revealed and appointed in the Gospel?

*Ans. No! The last compleat Revelation of the will of God being made by the Son, who is Lord of all, his Commands and Institutions are to be observed inbio-
lably unto the end of the World, without alteration, diminution, or addition, Heb. 1.1. chap. 10.25,26,27. Mat. 28.20. 1 Cor. 11.26. 1 Tim. 6.14.*

Explication.

*It was shewed before that all the Institutions of the Old Testament had respect unto the coming of Christ in the flesh, who was
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the end of the Law, *Rom. 10. 4.* and thereupon they were subject to *alteration* and *abolition* upon a twofold account.

First, Because that which they were appointed principally to instruct the Church in, and direct it unto the expectation of, was upon his coming accomplished and fulfilled, so that their end was absolutely taken away; and they could no more truly teach the mind and will of God: for they would still direct unto that which was to come, after it was past and accomplished. And this is that which the Apostle *Paul* so variously proves, and fully confirms in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, especially in the 7, 8, 9, and 10 Chapters.

Secondly, The Lord Christ during their continuance, was to come as the Lord over his whole House, with more full and ample authority, than any of those, whom God had employed in the institution of his Ordinances of old, were intrusted withal, *Heb. 1. 1, 2, 3.* He spake in former days by the Prophets, but now by the Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all, *Chap. 3. 5, 6.* Christ as a Son over his own House, whose House are we. And therefore they were all to be at his disposal, to confirm or remove, as he saw reason and occasion. And this he did virtually in the sacrifice of him;

himself, or the blood of his Cross, fulfilling and finishing of them all, John 19. 30. Breaking down the middle wall of partition, abolishing in his flesh the enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, blotting out the hand-writing of Ordinances, he took it out of the Way, nailing it to his cross, Ephes. 2. 15. Col. 2. 14.

Secondly, *Authoritatively*, by his Spirit in the Apostles, and the doctrine of the Gospel preached by them, Act. 15. 10, 11. Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers nor we were able to bear; but we believe that through the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they, Gal. 3. 24, 25. Wherefore the Law was our Schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a Schoolmaster, Chap. 5. 2, 3, 4. And eventually, or providentially, when he caused sacrifice and offering to cease, by the Prince of the people, that came with an Army making desolate, to destroy both City and Sanctuary, Dan. 9. 26, 27. according to his prediction, Mat. 24. 2. But now under the New Testament, the Worship that is appointed in the Gospel, is founded in, and built upon what is already past and accomplished,

plished, namely the death and life of Jesus Christ, with the sacrifice and attonement for sin made thereby, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25, 26. which can never be again performed; neither is there any thing else to the same purpose, either *needful* or possible, Heb. 10. 26. So that there is not any ground left for any new institution of Worship, or any alteration in those that are already instituted. Nor,

Secondly, Can any one be expected to come from God with a greater and more full authority for the Revelation of his mind, than that wherewith his only Son was accompanied; which yet must be, if any alterations were to be made in the appointments of Worship that he hath instituted in the Gospel.

For no Inferiour, nor an Equal Authority, can abolish or alter that which is already appointed, so as to give satisfaction unto the Conscience of Men in obedience unto such alterations. And therefore because there arose not a Prophet like unto Moses under the Old Testament, there could be no alteration made in his Institutions, but the Church was bound severely to observe them all until the coming of Christ, Mal. 4. 4. *Remember ye the Law of Moses my Servant,*

vant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb, for all Israel, with his Statutes and Judgements; and that because there arose not a Prophet afterwards in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face, Deut. 34. 10. And our Apostle to prove the right of Christ to alter the Ordinances of the Law, lays his foundation in manifesting that he was above the Angels, Heb. 1. 4. being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, and that because the Law was given by the Ministry of Angels, chap. 2. 2. And so also that he was greater than Moses, chap. 3. 3. For ~~this~~ man was accounted worthy of more glory than Moses, in as much as he who hath builded the House, hath more honour than the House; Moses, verily was faithful in all his House, as a Servant, but Christ as a Son over his own house: Because Moses was the Law-giver, and the Mediator between God and Man in the giving of the Law. Now if this be the sole foundation and warrant of the alteration made of Mosaical Ordinances by Christ, namely that he was greater, and exalted above all those whose Ministry was used in the dispensation of the Law, unless some can be thought to be greater, and exalted in authority above the Son of God,

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there can be no alteration expected in the Institutions of the Gospel.

Qu. 6. May not such an Estate of Faith and Perfection in Obedience be attained in this life, as wherein Believers may be freed from all Obligations, unto the observation of Gospel-Institutions?

Ans. No! For the Ordinances and Institutions of the Gospel, being inseparably annexed unto the Evangelical Administration of the Covenant of Grace, they may not be left unobserved, disused, or omitted, whilst we are to walk before God in that Covenant without contempt of the Covenant it self, as also of the Wisdom and Authority of Jesus Christ. Heb. 3. 3, 4, 5, 6. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. Luk. 22. 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25, 26. Heb. 10. 25. Rev. 2. 5. chap. 3. 3.

Explication.

All our faith, all our obedience in this life, whatever may be obtained, or attained unto therein, it all belongs unto our walking with God in the Covenant of Grace, wherein God dwells with Men, and they are his People, and God himself is with them to be their God. Other ways of communion with him,

him, of obedience unto him, of enjoyment of him, on this side Heaven and Glory, he hath not appointed nor revealed. Now this is the Covenant that God hath made with his people, *That he will put his Laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts, and will be to them a God, and they shall be to him a People, and he will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will he remember no more,* Heb. 8 9, 10, 11, 12. And whatever men attain unto, it is by vertue of the grace of that Covenant. Nor is there any grace promised in the Covenant to lead men in this life, or to give them up unto a state of perfection short of glory. Unto this Covenant, are the Institutions of Gospel-Worship annexed, and unto that administration of it which is granted unto the Church upon the coming and death of Christ. Without a renunciation and relinquishment of that Covenant, and the grace of it, these institutions cannot be omitted or deserted. If men suppose that they have attained to an estate wherein they need neither the grace of God, nor the mercy of God, nor the blood of Christ, nor the Spirit of Christ, it is not much material what they think of the Ordinances of Worship. Their pride and folly, without that mercy

which is taught, promised and exhibited in those Ordinances, will speedily be their ruine. Besides, the Lord Christ is the absolute *Lord over his own house*, Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. And he hath given out the Laws whereby he will have it guided and ruled whilst it is in this World. In and by these Laws, are his Ordinances of Worship established. For any persons on what pretence soever, to plead an exemption from the obligation of those Laws, it is nothing but to cast off the *Lordship* and dominion of Christ himself. And yet farther, to secure our obedience in this matter, he hath expressly commanded the continuance of them until his coming unto Judgement, as in the places above-quoted will appear.

Qu. 7. What are the chief things that we ought to aim at in our observation of the institutions of Christ in the Gospel?

Ans. 1. To sanctifie the Name of God.
 2. To own and avow our professed subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. 3. To build up our selves in our most holy Faith. And
 4. To testifie and confirm our mutual love, as we are Believers. (1.) Lev. 10. 3. Heb. 12. 28, 29. (2.) Deut. 26. 17. Josh. 24. 22. 2 Cor. 8. 5. (3.) Ephes. 4. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16.
 Jude

Jude 20. (4.) 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.

Explication.

That we may profitably and comfortably, unto the glory of God, and our own edification, be exercised in the observation of the Institutions and Worship of God, we are always to consider what are the *ends* for which God hath appointed them, and commanded our attendance unto them, that so our observance of them may be the *obedience of faith*. For what end so ever God hath appointed them unto, for that end are they useful and effectual, and for no other. If we come to them for any other end, if we use them for any other purpose, or with any other design, if we look for any thing in them or by them, but what God hath appointed them to communicate unto us, we dishonour God, and deceive our own souls. This we ought diligently to inquire into, to know not only *what* God requires of us, but *wherefore* also he requires it, and what he aims at therein. Some of the principal things whereof, are enumerated in this answer. And it is well known how horribly many of the Institutions of the Gospel, have been by some, especially the *Papists*, abused, by a neg-

lest of the *ends* of God in them, and imposing *new ends* of their own upon them, unto Superstition and Idolatry. Grace is ascribed unto the *outward observance* of them; whereas all Grace is of the promise, and the promise in the Covenant is given only to the faith of the right observers. The *elements* in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, are turned into a God, first worshipped, and then devoured, with many the like abominations.

Qu. 8. *How may we sanctifie the name of God in the use of Gospel Institutions?*

Ans. 1. By an holy reberence of his Soberaign Authority appointing of them. 2. An holy regard unto his special presence in them. 3. Faith in his promises annexed to them. 4. Delight in his Will, Wisdom, Love and Grace manifested in them. 5. Constancy and perseberance in obedience unto him in their due Obserbation. (1) Levit. 10. 3. Mal 1. 6. Rom. 4. 11. Exod. 20. 6, 7. Jam. 4. 12. (2) Mat. 28. 20. Isa. 59. 21. Exod. 29. 43, 44, 45. (3.) Gen. 15. 6. Heb. 4. 2, 6. Exod. 12. 27, 28. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18. chap. 7. 1. (4.) Psal. 88. 1, 2, 4. 10. Psal. 65. 4. Psal. 36. 7, 8. (5.) Psal. 23. 6. Psal. 27. 4. Rev. 2. 3, 10. Gal. 6. 9. Heb. 10. 23, 24, 25. Heb. 12. 3.

Explication.

Explication.

This is the first thing that God requireth us to attend unto, in the celebration of the Ordinances of his worship; namely, that we therein *sanctifie his name*, the greatest duty that we are called to in this world. This he layes down as the generall rule of all we do herein Levit. 10.3. *I will, saith he, be sanctified in them that come nigh unto me, and before all the people I will be glorified.* Whatever we do in his worship, we must do it that he may be sanctified, or whatever we do is an abomination to him. Now the principall wayes how we may herein sanctifie the name of God are expressed. As,

First, when in every Ordinance, we consider his appointment of it, and submit our souls and consciences unto his *authority* therein, which if we observe any thing in his worship but what he hath appointed, we cannot do. Not formality, nor custome, nor the precepts of Men, not any thing but the *Authority* and command of God, is to be respected in this obedience. This is the First thing that Faith regards in Divine Worship; it rests not in any thing, closeth not with any thing, but what It discerns that

God hath commanded, and therein it eyes his Authority as he requireth it, *Mal. 1. 6. If I be a father where is mine honour? If I be a Master, where is my Fear?* *Rom. 14. 11. As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.* Reverence then unto the authority of God appointing his Worship, is a principal means of sanctifying the name of God therein. This was the solemn sanction of all his Institutions of old, *Deut. 6. 4 5, 6, 7. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy might; and these words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children.* And the observation of them he presseth on this account, that the people might fear that glorious and dreadful Name, *The Lord thy God, Deut. 28. 58.* which Name he had so often engaged in his commands, saying, *Thou shalt do it, I am the Lord.* And in the New-Testament, our Lord Jesus Christ proposeth his authority as the foundation of his commanding, and our observation of all the Institutions of the Gospel, *Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given me in Heaven and Earth, go ye therefore,*

fore, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And he is to be considered in all our obedience, as the great and only Law-giver of his Church, as the one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy. Jam. 4. 12. the Sovereign Lord over his House, Heb. 3. 4, 5, 6. unto whom every knee is to bow, and every conscience to be in subjection; and he who heareth not his voice, is to be cut off from the People of God, Act. 3. 23. It shall come to pass, that every Soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the People.

Secondly, God hath frequently promised his special presence in and with his instituted Ordinances. Of old both unto the things themselves, and the places wherein they were, according to his appointment to be celebrated, those of places, being also of his special Institution. Under the New-Testament, all difference of, and respect unto place, is taken away, Job. 4. 21. The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this Mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father, but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit
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and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. And we are commanded in all places equally to make our Prayers and Supplications. But his presence is promised and continued with the due celebration of the Things themselves by Him appointed for his service, Mat.28.20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and loe I am with you even to the end of the World: In them is the Tabernacle of God with Men, and he dwells among them, and they are his People, Rev.21.3. the promise of Christ being, that where two or three are assembled in his Name, there he will be in the midst of them, Mat.8.18, 20. And this promised presence of God or Christ, consisteth, 1. In the power and efficacy which he by his Spirit implants upon his Ordinances to communicate his grace and mercy unto his Church; it being his Covenant, that his Spirit shall accompany his word for ever unto that purpose, Isa.59.21. 2. In the special Blessing which he gives his People in those Duties, both in the acceptance of them, and testifying his good will unto them, Exod.29.42,43,44,45. At the Tabernacle of the Congregation, will I meet with the People, saith the Lord, there will I meet with the Children of Israel.

And

And the Tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory, and I will dwell amongst the Children of Israel, and will be their God, Zech. 2. 10. 11. Ezek. 20, 40, 41. I will accept you with your sweet savour, Ezek. 43. 27. in both giving them intimate communion with himself by Jesus Christ, John 1. 3. By all these, he gives that special presence which he requires an especial reverence and regard of Faith unto, whereby his Name is yet farther sanctified. 3. God hath given special Promises, or Promises of his special Grace unto them that attend upon him in his Worship in a due manner. And hereunto also belongs that sacred Relation, which by vertue of Divine Institution is between the sacramental Elements, and the special Graces of the Covenant which they exhibit and confirm; and the mixing of these Promises with Faith, according as they are appropriated unto any particular institution, belongs also to the right sanctification of the Name of God. So also, 4. doth our delight in them: now this delights in the worship of God so much commended in Scripture, and proposed unto our example, consists not in any carnal self-pleasing, or satisfaction in the outward modes or manner of the performance of Divine Wor-

Worship, but it is an holy soul-refreshing-contemplation on the Will, Wisdom, Grace, and Condescention of God, in that he is pleased of his own sovereign meer will and grace, so to manifest himself unto such poor sinful Creatures as we are ; so to condescend unto our weakness, so to communicate himself unto us, so to excite and draw forth our souls unto himself, and to give us such pledges of his gracious intercourse with us, by Jesus Christ: by the contemplation of these things, is the soul drawn forth to delight in God.

Lastly, whereas great *opposition* lies oftentimes against the Churches obedience unto God in this matter, and much *persecution* befalls it on that account, great *weariness* also being apt from the remainders of unbelief, carnal wisdom, indwelling sin, weakness of the flesh in Believers themselves, to arise in the course thereof, and many temptations also beset them on every hand, to turn them aside from the way of Truth and Holiness, *Constancy* and *Perseverance* in the due and orderly celebration of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, belongs unto this duty. And this *perseverance* respecteth both the things themselves, and the manner of their performance, both which are of the highest concernment

cernment for us diligently to attend unto.

First, as to the *things themselves*; herein do we principally glorifie God, and give due honour unto Jesus Christ, when we abide in our professed subjection unto him, and observance of his commands, against difficulties, oppositions and persecutions. This he taketh notice of, *Rev. 2. 13. Thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denyed my faith, even in those dayes wherein Antipals was my faithfull Martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.* And this he requireth of us indispensably if we will be his Disciples, or ever hope to obtain the reward, *Mar. 10. 38, 39. He that taketh not his Cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me*; and it is he who endureth unto the end, that shall be saved, *Matth. 24. 13.* And unto them who are faithfull unto the death, and them alone doth he give the Crown of Life, *Rev. 2. 10.* giving us caution not to lose those things which we have wrought, that we may receive a full reward, *2. John 8.* And as to the manner of their performance, two things are to be regarded in this duty of perseverance, and the sanctification of the name of God therein.

First, The *inward principle* of our obedience, our faith and love which are to be pre-

preserved from decay, Rev. 2. 4, 5. *I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love; remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy first works,* Chap. 3. 3. *Remember how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast and repent.*

Secondly, The outward manner of observance which is to be kept intire, according to the primitive institution of Christ; 1 Cor. 11. 23. *I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, not admitting of any corruptions in it to avoid the greatest trouble,* Gal, 5. 11. *And I Brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer Persecution?*

Qⁿ. 9. *How do we in our Observation of them profess our subjection unto the Lord Jesus Christ and his Gospel?*

Ans^w. In that being all of them 1. Appointed by him as the head Lato-giber, King of his Church. And 2. Made by him the ensignes and tokens of his Kingdom, and Subjects, in their due obserbation principally consists that profession of him, and his name, which he so often calleth us unto, and so indispensably requireth at our hands, Mat. 28. 18, 19, 20. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Heb.

Heb. 3. 6. Heb. 12. 25. John 8. 31. Chap. 13. 13. Chap. 14. 15, 21, 23. Chap. 15. 14, 17. Chap. 13. 35. Chap. 15. 14. Luke 9. 26. Rom. 10. 10. 1 John 2. 3, 4.

Explication.

The ground and reason of this Duty is evident. The Lord Jesus Christ streightly enjoyns all his Disciples the *profession* of his name, and layes it on them as indispensable unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10. *With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, with the mouth confession, or profession, is made unto salvation.* See John 12. 42, 43, 44, 45. Now this *profession* of the name of Christ, which is so much abused and mistaken in the World, consists in the *keeping of his commandments*, John 15. 14. *ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:* So also Mat. 28. 20. his Disciples are to be taught to do, and observe, whatever he commandeth. Now whereas he is the head and King of the Church, the next immediate and special Law-giver of it, appointing unto it all its Ordinances, and its whole worship, as it becomes him who is Lord of the house, the institutions of the Gospel worship are the most especial commands: and in their observation, consists

consists that *profession* of him which he requires of us; Therein doth he call them out of the world by profession, whom he hath redeemed out of it by his blood, 1 Cor. 6. 15, 16, 17. Rev. 5. 9. In these he exerciseth his *Kingly*, or *Lordly* power over his Church. Heb. 3. 6. And in the willing obedience of his people, gathering themselves unto the Ensigns of his Rule, he is glorified in the World.

Qu. 10. *How do we in and by them build up our selves in our most holy faith?*

Ans. By the exercise of that communion with God in Christ Jesus, which in their due Observation he graciously invites and admits us unto, for the increase of his grace in us, and the testification of his love and good will towards us. Gen. 17. 10. Levit. 26. 11, 12. Prov. 9. 5, 6. Ezek. 26. 27, 28. Zach. 14. 16, 17. Mat. 26. 27, 28. Rom. 6. 3.

Explication.

The next and principall ends of all instituted worship in respect of Believers, are the increase of the Grace of God in them, their edification in their most holy faith, and the testi-

restification of the good will of God unto them, Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. And he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lye in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love; may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joyned together and compacted, by that which every joynt supplyeth according to the effectuall working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it self in love. Whence also is that prayer of the Apostle for the blessing of God upon the Church, in the use of them, Ephes. 3. 16, 17, 18. That he will grant you according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inward man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that ye being rooted and grounded in
D love,

love, may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, the length, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God: For these ends, and with a design to have them accomplished, in and upon their souls, ought they to attend unto them. James 1.21. *Receive with meekness the ingrafted word of God, which is able to save your souls, 1 Per. 2. 2. As new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.* Unto the effecting of these ends, especially the increase and establishment of our faith, are they suited and appointed of God, whereon all their efficacy doth depend. In their due observation, doth God give out that supply of Grace which he hath promised, Ephes. 1. 16, 17, 18, 19. And thus also is faith exercised, in an especial manner, which is the only ordinary means of its growth and increase. Habits both *acquired*, and *infused*, are increased and strengthened by frequent acts on suitable objects, Hos. 6. 3. *Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord.* In the celebration of Gospel Ordinances, God in Christ proposeth himself in an intimate manner to the believing soul, as his God, and reward; and his love in Christ,

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in an especiall manner in some Ordinances. So doth Christ also exhibit himself thereunto, Rev. 3. 20. *Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will suppe with him, and he with me,* Faith therefore directed by the word to rest in God, to receive the Lord Christ in the observation of his Ordinances, is excited, increased, strengthened, and that in answer unto the appointment and promises of God.

Qu. 11. *How are mutuall love and communion among Believers testified and confirmed in their Observation?*

Ans. In that they are appointed by the Lord Christ for that end, and in their own nature as attended unto in their Assemblies, are in an especial manner suited unto that purpose. John 13. 35. I Cor. 10. 16, 17. I Cor. 11. 18, 19. Ephel. 4. 4, 5, 6.

Explication.

The principles of mutual spirituall love among Believers, arise from their relation unto one Father, Matth. 23. 9. *One is your Father*

which is in Heaven: who giveth unto all them that believe in Christ, *Power to become the sons of God*, John 1. 12. And their being all **C**hildren of the same Family; that family in Heaven and Earth which is called after the name of God the Father of it, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Ephes. 3. 14. 15. and unto Christ Jesus as their elder Brother, who is not *ashamed to call them Brethren*, Heb. 2. 11. being by him born of God; and from their participation of one and the self same Spirit, which dwelleth in them, as they are the *Temple of God*, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in them 1 Cor. 3. 16. as also in all the fruits of that one Spirit, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. and in that *one faith* and hope whereunto they are called, Eph. 4. 4, 5, 6, *endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all. and through all, and in you all.* And that love which is not built on these principles and foundations, is not *Evangelical*, what ever other ground it may have, or occasion it may pretend unto. Communion of Saints consists in their mutual love duly exercised according to rule, and all communion is an effect of Union. In Union there.

therefore must lye the springs of love : and this consists in a joynt incorporation of Believers into Christ ; for *as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ ;* for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body ; and this they have by the means before mentioned, namely by their adoption, faith, and inhabitation of Spirit. Now in the joynt celebration of the Ordinances of Gods worship, they altogether make profession of these principles, and act that one faith, hope, and love jointly, whereof they are made partakers, and thereby grow up more and more into the head by that which every joynt supplieth, *Eph. 4. 16.* And some of them are peculiarly designed by the Lord Christ, for the testification of their love, and union among themselves, *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? as we being many are one bread, & one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.*

Qu. 12. *What is principally to be attended unto by us in the manner of the celebration of the worship of God, and observation of the*
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institutions and Ordinances of the Gospel?

Ans^r. That we observe and do all whatsoever the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe, in the way that he hath prescribed; and that we add nothing unto, or in the observation of them, that is of mans invention or appointment. Deut. 4. 2. chap. 12. 32. Jer. 7. 27. Mat. 15. 9, 13. Mat. 17. 5. Coloss. 2. 3. Mat. 28. 20 Heb. 3. 3, 4, 5, 6. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Rev. 22. 18. 1 Chron. 16. 13. Isa. 29. 13.

Explication.

This was in part spoken to before on the *third Question*, where it was shewed that the *Scripture* is the only way and means, whereby God hath revealed what that worship is, which he will accept in and of the Church.⁴ Here, moreover, as to the duty of the Church in this matter, three things are asserted.

First, That we are to observe and *do* all whatsoever the Lord Christ hath commanded us to observe. This lyes plain in the command, Mat. 28. 20. *Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* And we are directed unto it in the injunction given us from Heaven, to *hear*, that is obey him in all things; Mat. 17. 5. he being the Prophet to whose teachings and instructions, we owe obedience on pain of extermination from among the people of God, Dent. 18. 15. Act. 3. 22, 23. Whatever he hath appointed, commanded, revealed as the will of God to be observed in or about the worship, of God that is to be kept & observed by the Church inviolably. For if we are his Friends & Disciples, we will keep his commandments. No *disuse* of what continuance soever, can discharge us from the observation of institutions. After the Feast of *Tabernacles* had been *disused* from the times of *Joshua*, unto the return from the captivity, the restoration of it was required of God and accepted with him, Nth. 8. 17. No
abuse

abuse of how high a nature soever can absolve us from obedience unto an institution, *1 Cor. 18. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.* After the great abuse of the Lords Supper in that Church, the Apostle recalls them again unto the observation of it, according to the institution of Christ. And after the defilement of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, under the Anti-Christian apostacy, yet the Temple & the Altar are to be measured again, *Rev. 11. 1.* & the Tabernacle of God was again to be raised amongst men. *Rev. 21. 3.* No opposition, no persecution, can give the Church a dispensation wholly to omit, and lay aside the use of any thing that the Lord Christ hath commanded to be observed in the worship of God, whilest we are under the obligation of that great rule, *Acts 4. 19. Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* It is true in the observation of positive institutions, we may have regard unto rules and prescriptions of prudence, as to times, places, and seasons; that by no inadvertency or miscarriage of ours, or advantage taken by the adversaries of the truth, the edification of the truth, the edification of the Church be hindered. So the Disciples met with *the doors shut* for fear of the *Jewes*, *John 20. 19.* and Paul met with the Disciples in the night, in *an upper chamber*, for the celebration of all the Ordinances of the Church, *Acts 20. 7, 8.* yet as to the obligation unto their observation, it indispensably binds us, and that alwayes, & that as to all the institutions of Christ whatever, *Heb. 10. 25. Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as you see the day approaching.* To dispence with Christs commands practical'y is unlawful; much more doctrinally; most of all *authoritatively* as the Pope takes on himself to do. This then is the Churches duty, to search out all the commands of Christ

Christ recorded in the Gospel, and to yield obedience unto them. We are not in this matter, to take up meerly with what we find in practice amongst others, no though they be men good or holy. The duty of the Church, and consequently of every member of it in his place and station, is to search the Scriptures, to inquire into the mind of Christ, and to find out whatever is appointed by him; or required of his Disciples; and that with hearts and minds prepared unto a due observation of whatever shall be discovered to be his will.

Secondly, Whatever belongs unto the worship of God in the *way and manner* whereby any of the Ordinances of Christ is to be performed, comes also under the command of Christ which is duly to be attended unto, & observed. Indeed whatever is of this nature appointed by Christ, it doth therefore belong to the worship of God. And what is not so appointed, neither doth, nor can be any part thereof. Of this nature are the celebration of all other Ordinances with prayer; for *every thing is sanctified by the word of God and prayer*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. of some of them indispensable in the assemblies of the Church, 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. Chap. 11. 20, 24, 25, 33. With care, in the observation of the generall
rules

sales of love, modesty, condescension and
 prudence, *doing all things decently and in or-*
der, 1 Cor. 11. 33. Chap. 14. 40. *Gestures* in
 some sacred actions, *Mat.* 26. 20, 26. John
 13. 23. All which the Church is diligently to
 acquire into, as things that belong to the pat-
 tern of the house of God, the goings out
 thereof, and the comings in thereof, the
 forms thereof, and the Ordinances thereof,
 with the Laws thereof, promised to be shew-
 ed unto it, *Ezek.* 43. 11. To attend
 carefully to their observation in its duty,
 being left at liberty as to all other cir-
 cumstances, which no authority of man can
 give any real relation to the worship of
 God unto. Therein lyes the exercise of
 that Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the
 knowledge of the myserie of the Gospel,
 which is given unto the Church, *Ephes.* 1. 17,
 18. It was the *wisdom* of the antient Church
 to do and observe all that God appointed,
 in the way and manner that he had prescri-
 bed for their observance, *Deut.* 4. 5, 6. *Behold*
I have taught you statutes and judgements, even
as the Lord my God commanded me; keep there-
fore and do them, for this is your wisdom and
understanding. And herein is the command of
 of Christ kept inviolate and unblameable. The
 perswasion of some, that the Lord hath not
 pre-

prescribed all things wherein his worship is concerned, seems to proceed from a negligence in inquiring after what he hath so prescribed: & when once that perswasion is entertained, all farther inquiry is superseded, & despised. For what end should anyone seek after that which he is satisfied cannot be found? as that which is not cannot be. But this mistake will be elsewhere more fully discovered.

Thirdly, A principal part of the duty of the Church in this matter is, to take care that nothing be admitted or practised in the Worship of God, or as belonging thereunto, which is not instituted and appointed by the Lord Christ. In its care faithfulness and watchfulness herein, consists the principal part of its *loyalty* unto the Lord Jesus as the Head, King and Law-giver of his Church; & which to stir us up unto, he hath left so many severe interdictions and prohibitions in his word against all *additions* to his commands upon any pretence whatever; of which afterwards.

Qu. 13. Are not some Institutions of the New Testament ceased, as unto any obligation unto their observation, and therefore now rightly disused?

Ans. (1) Some Symbolical tokens of moral duties occasionally used, only for present

ent instruction in those duties, are mentioned in the Gospel, without any intention to oblige Beliebers unto the formal constant use or repetition of them. And (2.) some temporary appointments relating unto gifts in the Church, bestowed only for a season in the first plantation of the Gospel are ceased: but (3.) No institution or command of Christ, given unto the whole Church, relating unto the Evangelical administration of the New Covenant, for the use and benefit of all Beliebers, doth or shall cease to the end of the World, nor can be wholly omitted without a violation of the authority of Jesus Christ himself, John 13. 12, 13, 14, 15. Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 16. 20. 1 Tim. 5. 10. Mar. 6. 13. Jam. 5. 14. Matth. 28. 20. 1 Tim. 6. 14. 1 Cor. 11. 26.

Explication.

Mention is made in the Scriptures of sundry things practised by the Lord Christ and his Apostles, which being then in *common use* amongst men, were occasionally made by them *Symbolical* instructions in moral duties. Such were *washing of feet* by one another, the *holy kiss*, and the like, but there being no more in them, but a sanctified use directed

directed unto the present civil customs and usages, the commands given concerning them, respect not the *outward action*, nor appointed any continuance of them, being peculiarly suited unto the state of things and persons in those Countreys; as Joh. 13. 12, 13, 14, 15. *After he had washed their Feet, and had taken his Garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to ye? ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am; If I then your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you.* 'Tis evident that it is the moral Duty of Brotherly Love, in condescension, and mutual Helpfulness to be expressed in all necessary Offices, as occasion doth require, that is the thing which Jesus Christ here enjoyneth his Disciples, and leads them to by his own example, in an office of love then in use in those parts. The same is to be said of the *holy kisse*, Rom. 16. 16. which was a temporary occasional token of intire love; which may in answer thereunto, be expressed by any sober usage of salutation amongst men to the same purpose. But the things themselves were not instituted for any continuance, nor do represent any special grace of

of the New Covenant, which is inseparable from every institution of Gospel worship properly so called. Common usages or practices therefore, directed to be used in a due manner, and unto a proper end, where they are used, make them not institutions of worship. Neither have they in them as so commanded or directed, any one thing that concurs to the constitution of a Gospel-Ordinance: for neither had they their rise in the authority of Christ, nor is any continuance of them enjoined, nor any promise annexed unto them, nor any grace of the New Covenant represented or exhibited in them.

Besides, there were in the first Churches continued for a while certain *extraordinary gifts*, that had their effects visibly on the outward senses of men, and tended not immediately unto the edification of the Church in their faith, but unto the conviction of others and vindication of the authority of them by whom the Gospel was Preached and propagated. Such was that *gift of healing* the sick, which being an especial effect of the Holy-Ghost for the advantage of the Church in those dayes, in some places it was accompanied by *anointing with Oyle*, but this being no universal practice, and used only in the exercise of a gift extraordinary, whose

whose use and being are long since ceased, never was appointed nor intended to be of continuance in the Church, which is not tyed by the Lord Christ to the empty signs and shadows of things whose substance is not enjoined. Besides, no spiritual grace of the Covenant was ever intimated, sealed, or exhibited by that usage of *anointing with Oyle*. The first mention of it is, *Mark 6.13.* where its practice is reckoned among the effects of that *extraordinary power* which the Lord Christ committed unto his *twelve Disciples* on their first sending out, & is referred unto the same *series of miracles* which they wrought in pursuit, and by vertue thereof: *they cast out many Devils, and anointed with Oyle many that were sick, and healed them.* And by what is there recorded, the subsequent mention of it *1 Jam. 5.14.* is to be regulated. But now unto a real *evangelical* institution of worship; it is required (1) That it be a command of Christ manifested by his Word, or Example proposed unto our imitation, *Matth. 28. 20.* (2) That it be given and enjoined unto the *whole Church* with the limitation of its administration expressed in the Word, *1 Cor. 11. 25.* (3) That unto the due performance of it, Gospel grace be required in them that attend unto it. (4) That

ed, it teach, or represent, or seal, or improve
some grace of the Covenant, and have a pro-
mise of acceptation annexed unto it; and
whatever is thus appointed, the Church is in-
dispensably to continue in the observation
of, unto the end of the World.

Qu. 14. *May not the Church find out, and ap-
point to be observed, such religious rites, as being
adjoynd unto the celebration of Gods instituted
worship, may farther the devotion of the Wor-
shippers, and render the worship it self in its
performance more decent, beautiful and order-
ly, as the appointing of Images, and the like?*

Ans. All acceptable devotion in them
that worship God, is the effect of faith,
which respects the precepts and promi-
ses of God alone. And the comeliness
and beauty of Gospel worship, consisteth
in its relation unto God by Jesus Christ,
as the merciful high-Priest over his house,
with the glorious administration of the
spirit therein. The order also of it lyeth in
the due and regular obserbation of all that
Christ hath appointed, and therefore all such
inventions are in themselves needless, and
useless, and because forbidden, unlawful to
be obserbed, Rom. 1. 21. Chap. 14. 23. Heb. 4.
2. Chap. 11. 6. Deut. 13. 4. Chap. 27. 10. Chap.

30. 2, 8, 20. Chap. 11. 27. Matth. 27. 5. Ife
 29. 13. Heb. 11. 4, 6. Ephes. 2. 18. 2 Cor
 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21, 22. Joh
 4. 21, 23. 1 Cor. 14. 20. Matth. 28. 20
 Exod. 20. 4. Deut. 4. 2. Matth. 15. 13. Ife
 29. 13, Deut. 12. 32. Chap. 17. 3.

Explication.

Three things are usually pleaded in the
 Justification of the observance of such *rites*
 and ceremonies in the worship of God.

(1.) That they tend unto the further
 rance of the *devotion* of the Worshipers.

(2.) That they render the Worship it self
comely and beautiful.

(3.) That they are the great preserver
 of *order* in the celebration thereof. And
 therefore on these accounts they may be
 instituted, or appointed by some, and ob-
 served by all. But things are indeed quite
 otherwise. *God is a spirit and will be wor-*
shipped in spirit and in truth, John 4. 24.
 And no devotion is acceptable unto him,
 but what proceedeth from, and is an effect
 of faith, for *without faith it is impossible*
so please God, Heb. 11. 6. and faith in all
 things respects the commands and authori-
 ty of God; for, saith he, *in vain do they*
wor.

worship me, who teach for doctrines the commandments of men, Matth. 15. 9. and he rejecteth all that honour which is given him by those, whose fear towards him, or worship of him, is taught by the precepts of men, Isa. 29. 13. These things therefore being utterly destitute of divine Authority, they can no way farther or promote the devotion of the Worshippers. What natural, or carnal affections may be excited by them, as men may inflame themselves with Idols, Isa. 57. 5. or what outward, outside devotion they may direct unto, or excite, is uncertain; but that they are no means of stirring up the grace of God in the hearts of Believers, or of the increase or strengthening of their faith, which things alone God accepts in Gospel Worship, seeing they are not appointed by him for any such purpose, is most certain. For to say that any thing will effectually stir up devotion, that is, excite, strengthen or increase grace in the heart towards God, that is not of his own appointment, is on the one hand to reflect on his wisdom and care towards his Church, as if he had been wanting towards it in things so necessary, which he declares against, Isa. 5. 4. *what, saith he, could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* so

on the other, it extolls the wisdom of man above what is meet to ascribe unto it. Shall men find out that, which God would not, could not, in matters of so great importance unto his glory, and the souls of them that obey him? yea, and it cannot be but that attendance unto them, and their effect must needs divert the mind from those proper spiritual actings of faith and grace which is its duty to attend unto. And this is evidently seen in them who indulging to themselves in their observation in multiplied instances, as in the Church of Rome, have changed the whole spiritual worship of the Church, into a *Theatrical* pompous shew of carnal devotion.

Secondly, The *comeliness* and beauty of Gospel worship, doth not in the least depend upon them, nor their observation. The Apostle doth in sundry places expressly compare the spiritual worship of the Gospel, with that of the Law, whilst the Church had a *worldly Sanctuary* and carnal Ordinances, *Heb. 9. 1.* and although it be most evident, that the worship of the Old Testament, did for the glory and ornaments of outward ceremonies, and the splendour of their observation, far exceed and excell that worship which God commands now, as suitable

able unto the simplicity of the Gospel, yet both the Apostle prefer *this* for glory, comeliness and beauty, unspeakably above the other; which manifests that these things can have no respect unto outward Rites and Ceremonies, wherein the chief admirers of them can no way *vye* for glory with the old worship of the Temple. So the Apostle, 2 Cor. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. if the ministrations of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses, if ~~for~~ the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away, how shall not the ministrations of the spirit be rather glorious; for if the ministrations of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministrations of righteousness exceed in glory, for even that which was made glorious had no glory, in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth; for if that which was done away is glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. He compareth the two ministrations, and the several worships of the Law and Gospel, preferring *this* unspeakably above the other; sufficiently manifesting, that the glory of it consisteth not in any pompous observance of outward Ceremonies. And elsewhere He declareth, that indeed it doth consist in its relation to God in Christ, with

the liberty and boldness of the worshippers to enter into the holy place, unto the Throne of Grace under the Ministry of their merciful and faithful High-Priest, being enabled thereunto by the spirit of adoption and supplications; for therein, *through Christ we have an access in one spirit unto the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. as it is expressed Heb. 10. 19, 20, 21. *having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* This is the glory of Gospel worship, and the *beauty* of it whose consideration whilest the minds of men are diverted from, to look for beauty in the outward preparation of ceremonies they lose the priviledge purchased for Believers by the blood of Christ. Instead then of farthering the *beauty* and *comeliness* of Gospel worship, they are apt to lead men into a dangerous error and mistake, namely that the *beauty* and *excellency* of it consist in such things, as upon a due consideration will appear to be mean and carnal

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and far beneath those ceremonies and ordinances of the Old Testament which yet in comparison of the Worship of the Gospel, are called *Worldly, carnal, beggerly*, and are said to have no glory.

Thirdly, They do not in the least tend unto the preservation of due order in the celebration of divine Worship. All order consists in the due observation of *rule*. The rules of actions are either *natural*, or of his special appointment. Both these take place in religious worship; the institutions or commands of Christ, containing the substance thereof, in their observation principally consists the order of it. Whatever is of circumstance in the manner of its performance, not capable of especial determination, as emerging or arising only *occasionally* upon the doing of that which is appointed, at this, or that time, in this, or that place, and the like, is left unto the rule of *moral prudence*, in whose observation their order doth consist. But the *super-addition* of ceremonies, necessarily belonging neither to the institutions of worship, nor unto those circumstances whose disposal falls under the rule of moral prudence, neither doth nor can add any thing unto the *due order* of Gospel Worship. So that they are

altogether needless, and useles in the Worship of God. Neither is this the whole of the inconvenience wherewith their observance is attended; for although they are not in particular, and expressly in the Scripture *forbidden*, for it was simply impossible that all instances wherein the wit of man might exercise its invention in such things should be reckoned up and condemned, yet they fall directly under those severe *prohibitions* which God hath recorded to secure his worship from all such *additions* unto it, of what sort soever. Yea the main design of the *second precept* is to forbid *all making unto our selves* any such thing in the worship of God, to add unto what he hath appointed, whereof an instance is given in that of *making and worshipping Images*, the most common way that the sons of men were then prone to transgress by, against the institutions of God. And this sense and understanding of the *commandment* is secured by those ensuing prohibitions against the adding any thing at all unto the commands of God in his worship, Deut. 4. 2. *Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, Chap. 12. 32. what things soever*

I command you, observe to do it, thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it, Chap. 17. 3. to the same purpose were the places before mentioned, Matth. 15. 9. as also is that severe rule applyed by our Saviour unto the additions of the Pharisees, Verse 13. Every plant, which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

And there is yet farther evidence contributed unto this intention of the command, from those places where such evils and corruptions, as were particularly forbidden in the worship of God, are condemned, not on the special account of their being so forbidden, but on that more general, of being introduced without any warrant from Gods Institutions or commands, Jer. 7. 31. *they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the Son of Hinnom to burn their Sons and their Daughters in the fire, which I commanded not, neither came it into my heart. Chap. 19. 5. they have also built the high places of Baal to burn their Sons with fire, for burnt-offerings unto Baal which I commanded not, nor spake, neither came it into my mind. These things were particularly forbidden; but yet God here condemns them as coming under the general evil of making additions unto his commands,*

doing that which he commanded not, nor did it ever enter into his heart.

The *Papists* say indeed, that all *additions* corrupting the worship of God are forbidden; but such as farther adorn, and preserve it, are not so; which implies a contradiction; for whereas every *addition* is principally a *corruption* because it is an *addition*, under which notion it is forbidden, (and that in the worship of God which is forbidden is a corruption of it) there can be no such preserving, adorning addition, unless we will allow a preserving and adorning corruption. Neither is it of more force which is pleaded by them, that the additions which they make, belong not unto the *substance* of the worship of God, but unto the *circumstances* of it; for every circumstance observed religiously, or to be observed in the worship of God, is of the substance of it; as were all those *ceremonious observances* of the Law which had the same respect in the prohibitions of adding, with the most weighty things whatsoever.

Qu. 15. *Whence may it appear that the right and due observation of Instituted worship, is of great importance unto the glory of God, and of high concernment unto the Souls of Men?*

Ans.

Ans^r. This is fully taught in the Scriptures; as (1) God would never accept in any state of the Church, before or since the fall, moral Obedience without the observation of some institutions as tryals, tokens, and pledges of that obedience. And (2) in their use and signification by his appointment they nearly concern the principal mysteries of his will and grace. And (3) By their celebration is he glorified in the World: And therefore, (4) As he hath made blessed promises to his people, to grant them his presence and to bless them in their use: So (5) Being the tokens of the marriage relation that is between him and them, with respect unto them alone he calls himself a jealous God; And (6) hath actually exercised signal severity towards the neglecters, corrupters or abusers of them.

(1) Gen. 2. 16, 17. Gen. 4. 3, 4. Gen. 17. 9. 10, 11. Exod. 12. 24. Exod. 20. Matth. 28. 19, 20. Matth. 26. 26, 27. Eph. 4. 11, 12. Rev. 1. 13. Rev. 21. 3. (2) Gen. 17. 10. Exod. 12. 23, 24. Rom. 6. 3, 4, 5. Matth. 26. 27. 1 Cor. 11. 25, 26, 27. (3) See question the eighth and ninth. (4) Exod. 29. 42, 43, 45. Deut. 14. 23. Psalm 133. 3. Matth. 18. 20 Rev.

- 21. 3. (5) Exod. 20. 5. Deut. 4. 23, 24
 Josh. 24. 19. Ezek. 16. (6) Levit. 10. 1, 2
 Num. 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. 1 Sam. 2. 28, 29
 2 Sam. 6. 6, 7. 2 Chron. 26. 16, 19. 1 Cor
 11. 30.

Explication.

For the most part, the instituted worship of God is neglected and despised in the World. Some are utterly regardless of it, supposing that if they attend, after their manner, unto moral obedience, that neither God nor themselves are much concerned in this matter of his worship. Others think the disposal and ordering of it to be so left unto men, that as to the *manner* of its performance, they may do with it as it seems right in their own eyes, And some follow them therein as willingly walking after their commandments, without any respect unto the will or authority of God. But the whole Scripture gives us utterly another account of this matter. The *honour* of God in this world, the *tryal* of our faith and obedience, the *order* and beauty of the Church, the *exaltation* of Christ in his professed subjection to him, and the *saving* of our souls in the wayes of his appointment, are

are therein laid upon the due and right observance of instituted worship. And they who are negligent about these things, what ever they pretend, have no real respect unto any thing that is called Religion. First therefore, in every state and condition of the Church, God hath given his Ordinances of worship, as the *touchstone* and tryal of its faith and obedience, so that they by whom they are neglected, do openly refuse to come unto Gods tryal. In the state of innocency, the tryal of *Adams* obedience according to the law of nature, was in and by the institution of the trees of life, and of the knowledge of good and evil, *Gen. 2. 16, 17.* And the Lord God commanded the Man, saying; of every tree of the garden thou maist freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die. This was the first institution of God, and it was given unto the Church, in the state of innocency and purity. And in our first Parents neglect of attending thereunto, did they transgress the whole law of their creation, as failing in their duty in that which was appointed for their tryal in the whole; *Chap. 3. 11.* *Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou should-*

shouldest not eat? &c. And the Church in his family after the fall, built upon the promise was tryed also in the matter of instituted worship. Nor was there any discovery of the wickedness of *Cain*, or approbation of the faith of *Abel*, until they came to be proved in their sacrifices, a new part of Gods instituted worship, the first in the state and condition of sin and the fall whereinto it was brought. *Gen.* 4. 3, 4, 5. In process of time, it came to pass *Cain* brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord, and *Abel* he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof; and the Lord had respect unto *Abel*, and to his offering, but unto *Cain*, and his offering he had not respect. The ground whereof the Apostle declares, *Heb.* 11. 4. By faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than *Cain*, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. In the observation of that first institution given to the Church in the state of the fall, did *Abel* receive a testimony of his being justified and accepted with God. Afterwards when *Abraham* was called, and peculiarly separated to bear forth the name of God in the world, and to become the spring of the Church for future ages, he had the institution of *circumcision*

circumcision given him for the tryal of his obedience; the Law and condition whereof was, that he who observed it not should be esteemed an alien from the covenant of God, and be cut off from his People. Gen. 17. 9, 10, 11. God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every manchild among you shall be circumcised, Verse the (14) and the uncircumcised manchild whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant. And in like manner so soon as ever his posterity were to be collected into a new Church state and order, God gave them the Ordinance of the *Pass-over*, Exod. 12. 24. Ye shall observe this thing for an Ordinance to thee and to thy Sons for ever; and that upon the same penalty with that of circumcision; to these he added many more on mount Sinai, Exod. 20. all as the tryals of their faith and obedience unto succeeding generations: How he hath dealt with his Church under the *new Testament*, we shall afterwards declare. In no state or condition then of the Church, did God ever accept of *moral Obedience* without the observation

observation of some instituted worship accommodated in his wisdom unto its various states and conditions. And not only so, but as we have seen, he hath made the observation of them according unto his mind and appointment, the means of the tryal of Mens whole obedience, and the rule of the acceptance or rejection of them. And so it continues at this day, what ever be the thoughts of men about the worship which at present he requires.

Besides, God hath appointed that his Ordinances of worship shall be as *effectual means* as to instruct us in the mysteries of his will and mind, so of communicating his love, mercy, and grace unto us; as also of that communion, or intercourse with his holy Majesty, which he hath graciously granted unto us by Jesus Christ. And this as it is sufficiently manifested in the Scriptures quoted in answer unto this question, so it is at large declared in the writings of those holy and good men, who have explained the nature of gospel Ordinances, and therefore in particular we need not here insist much in the farther proof of it. Thus *Abraham* was instructed in the nature of the covenant of grace by *circumcision*, Gen. 17. 10. which is often explained in the old Testament,

ment, by applying it in particular to the grace of *conversion*, called the *circumcision of the heart*, *Dent.* 10. 16. *Chap.* 30. 6. *Jer.* 4. 4. as also in the new Testament, *Coloss.* 2. 11. And by the *Passover* where the people taught, not only the mercy of their present deliverance, *Exod.* 12. 23, 24. but also to look for the *Lamb of God* who was to take away the sin of the world, *John* 1. 29. the true *Passover* of the people of God which was sacrificed for them, *1 Cor.* 5. 7. how our incision or implanting into Christ, is represented and signified by our *Baptism*, the Apostle declares, *Rom.* 6. 3, 4, 5. as also our communion with him in his death, by the Supper of the Lord, *Matth.* 26. 27. *1 Cor.* 11. 25. and all these graces which they teach, they also *exhibit*, and are the means of the communication of them unto Believers. Moreover the experience of all Believers, who have conscientiously waited upon God in their due observance, may be produced in the confirmation of it. The instruction, edification, consolation, Spiritual strength, courage, and resolution, which they have received in and by them, hath been witnessed unto in their lives, and ends; and they to whom these things are not of the greatest importance, do but in vain pretend

a regard unto God in any thing whatever

Farthermore, God hath appointed our duty in the observation of his instituted worship, to be the means of our glorifying him in the world. Nor can we otherwise give glory to God, but as we own his authority over us, and yield obedience to what he requires at our hands. And what we do herein, is principally evident in those duties which lie under the eye and observation of Men. Some duties of obedience there are which the world neither doth, nor can discern in Believers. Such are their faith, inward holiness, purity of heart, heavenly mindedness, sincere mortification of indwelling sin. Some whose performance ought to be hid from them, as personal prayer and almes. *Matth. 6. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* Some there are, which are very liable to misconstruction amongst Men, as Zeal in many of the actings of it. But this conscientious observation of instituted worship, and therein avowing our subjection unto the authority of God in Christ, is that which the World may see, and take notice of, and that, which unless in case of persecution, ought not to be hid from them; and that which they can have no pretence of scandal at. And therefore hath God appointed that by this means

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and way, we shall honour and glorifie him in the World, which if we neglect, we do evidently cast off all regard unto his concerns in this World. Herein it is, that we manifest our selves not be to ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, of him and his words, which he so indispensably requireth at our hands, *Mark 8. 38.* For, saith he, *whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.* Hereby do we keep the commandments of Christ, as his friends, *John 13. 35.* for these peculiarly are his commands, and if we suffer for them, then we do most properly suffer as Christians, which is our glory, that *1 Pet. 4. 14, 15, 16.* If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you, on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified, but let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busibody in other Mens matters, but if any Man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, But let him glorify God on this behalf. And a happy and a blessed thing it is, to suffer for the observation of the special commands of Christ.

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Father,

Father, to encourage us in our duty, the holy faithful God hath given us many great and precious promises, that he will graciously afford unto us his especial sanctifying blessing presence, in our attendance on his worship according to his appointment. For as he promised of old that he would make glorious the place of his feet, or abode amongst his people, *Isa. 60. 13.* that he would meet them in his sanctuary, the place of his worship, and there dwell amongst them, and bless them, and be their God. *Exod. 29. 42, 43, 44, 45. Dent. 14. 24.* so the Lord Jesus Christ hath promised his presence to the same ends and purposes, unto all them that assemble together in his name, for the observation of the worship which in the Gospel he hath appointed, *Matth. 18. 20.* For, saith he, *where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* And therein is the tabernacle of God, his gracious dwelling place, with Men. *Rev. 21. 3.* Now when God offereth unto us his presence, his gracious blessing, sanctifying, and saving presence, and that in and by promises which shall never fail, what unspeakable guilt must we needs contract upon our own souls, if we neglect or despise the tenders of such grace?

But

But because we are apt to be slothful, and are slow of heart in admitting a due sense of spiritual things that fall not in with the light and principles of nature, to stir us up unto a diligence in our attendance unto the will of God in this matter, he hath declared that he looks upon our obedience herein as our *whole loyalty* unto him in that *conjugal covenant* which he is pleased in Christ Jesus to take Believers into with himself, Jer. 3. 14. *turn O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you, and will take you one of a City, and two of a family, and will bring ye unto Sion, and I will give you Pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed ye with knowledge and understanding.* Coming unto Sion, in the worship of God, under the leading and conduct of Pastors according to the heart of God, is our answering the relation wherein we stand unto him as he is *married* unto us. And thereupon he teacheth us that as an *Husband*, he is *jealous* of our discharge of our duty in this matter, accounting our neglect of his worship, or profanation of it by inventions and additions of our own, to be *spiritual disloyalty, whoredome and adultery*, which his soul abhorreth, for which he will cast off an y Church, or people and that for

ever, See *Exod.* 20. 5. *Dent.* 4. 23, 24, *Jos.* 24. 19. *Ezek.* 16. whatever he will bear withal in his Church, he will not bear with that which his *jealousie* is exercised about. If it transgress therein, he will give it a bill of divorce; which repudiated condition, is the state of many Churches in the World, however they please, and boast themselves in their *meritricious* ornaments and practices.

To give yet farther strength unto all these considerations, that we may not only have rules and precepts, but examples also for our instruction, God hath given many signal instances of his *severity* against Persons who by ignorance, neglect, or regardlessness, have miscarried in not observing exactly his will and appointment in and about his worship. This was the case of *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, *Levit.* 10. 1, 2. of *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram*, *Numb.* 16. 3, 8, 9, 32, 35. of the sons of *Ely*, a sin not to be expiated with sacrifices and burnt offerings for ever, *1 Sam.* 2. 28, 29. of *Uzza* in putting the Ark into a Cart, when he should have born it upon his shoulders, *1 Chron.* 16. 13. of *Uzzia* the King in offering incense contrary to Gods institution, that duty being appropriated unto the Priests
of

of the posterity of Aaron, 2 Chron. 26. 16, 19. these are sufficient intimations of what care and diligence we ought to use, in attending unto what God hath appointed in his worship; and although now under the new Testament he doth not ordinarily proceed to the inflicting of temporal judgments in the like cases of neglect, yet he hath not wholly left us without instances of his putting forth tokens of his displeasure in temporal visitations on such miscarriages in his Church, 1 Cor. 11. 30. *For this cause, saith the Apostle, many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep.* From all which it appears of what concernment it is unto the glory of God, and the salvation of our own souls, to attend diligently unto our duty in the strict and sincere observation of the worship of the Gospel; For he lets us know, that now a more severe punishment is substituted against such transgressions in the room of that which he so visibly inflicted under the old Testament, Heb. 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Qu. 16. Is there yet any other consideration that may stir up Believers to an holy and religious care about the due observation of the institutions of the Gospel?

Ans.

Ans. *Pea!* namely that the great apostacy of the Church in the last dayes, foretold in the Scripture, and which God threatneth to punish and rebenge, consists principally in false worship, and a departure from the institutions of Christ. Rev. 14. 4, 5. Chap. 17. 1, 2, 3, 5.

Explication.

That there is an Apostacy of the Church foretold in the book of the Revelations, is acknowledged by all who with sincerity have inquired into the mind of God therein. The state of things at this day, and for many ages past in the World, sufficiently confirm that perswasion. And herein sundry things in general, are obvious unto every sober consideration thereof.

First the horrible evils, troubles and confusions that are to be brought into, and upon the World thereby.

Secondly, the high guilt and provocation of God, that is contained in it, and doth accompany it.

Thirdly, the dreadful vengeance that God in his appointed time will take upon all the promoters and obstinate maintainers of it. These things are at large all
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of them foretold in the *Revelation*, and therein also the Apostacy it self is set forth as the cause of all the plagues and destructions that by the righteous judgement of God, are to be brought upon the World in these latter dayes. Now as God doth earnestly call upon all that fear him, not to intermeddle, nor partake in the sins of the *Apostates*, lest they should also partake in their judgements, Chap. 18. 4. (*I heard a voice from Heaven, saying, come out of her my people that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.* So he doth plainly declare, wherein the apostacy and sin it self should principally consist, and that is in the corrupting and contaminating of the Ordinances of his Worship, or the introduction of false Worship joyned with the persecution of them who refused to submit thereunto. For this cause, is the sin it self set out under the name of *fornication*, and *whoredom*; and the Church that maintains it, is called the *Mother of Harlots*, Chap. 17. 5. That by fornication, and whoredom, in the Church, the adulterating of the worship of God, and the admission of false self-invented Worship in the room thereof, whereof God is jealous, is intended, the Scripture every where de-

clares. It is easie then to gather of how great concernment unto us it is, especially in these later dayes wherein this so hainous and provoking sin is prevalent in the World, carefully to attend unto the safe unerring rule of Worship, and diligently to perform the duties that are required therein.

Quest. 17. Which are the principal institutions of the Gospel to be observed in the Worship of God?

Ans. (1.) The calling, gathering and setting of Churches with their Officers, as the seat and subject of all other solemn instituted worship. (2.) Prayer with thanksgiving. (3.) Singing of Psalms. (4.) Preaching the Word. 5. Administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord. (6.) Discipline and rule of the Church collected and settled; most of which have also sundry particular duties relating unto them, and subservient unto their due observation. (1.) Matth. 28, 19, 20. Acts 2. 41, 42. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11 12. Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. 1 Cor. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 7. 17. Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5. 1 Tim. 3. 15. (2.) 1 Tim. 2. 1. Acts 6. 4. Acts 13. 2. 3. (3) Ephes.

(3.) Ephes. 5. 19. Coloss. 3. 16. (4.)
2 Tim. 4. 2. Acts 2. 42. 1 Cor. 14. 3.
Acts 6. 2. Heb. 13. 7. (5) Matth. 28. 19.
Matth. 26. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 11. 23. (6)
Matth. 18. 17, 18, 19. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8.
Rev. 2. 3.

Explication.

These things being all of them afterwards
to be spoken unto severally and apart, need
not here any particular Explication. They
are the principal heads wherein *Gospel-wor-*
ship consisteth, and whereunto the particu-
lar duties of it may be reduced.

Qu. 18. *Whereas sundry of these things*
are founded in the light and law of nature, as
requisite unto all solemn worship, and are
moreover commanded in the moral Law, and
explications of it in the Old Testament; how
do you look upon them as Evangelical institu-
tions to be observed principally on the authori-
ty of Jesus Christ?

Ans. Neither their general suitable-
ness unto the principles of right reason, and
the dictates of the light and law of nature,
nor the practice of them in the worship of
God under the Old Testament, do at all
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hinder them from depending on the institution of Jesus Christ, as to the especial ends of the glory of God in and by himself, and the edification of his Church in the faith which is in him wherunto he hath appointed them: For as unto that especial manner of their performance which he requireth; in which respect they are to be observed on the account of his authority and command only, *Matth. 17. 5. Matth. 28. 20. John 16. 23, 24. Heb. 3. 4. 5, 6. Ephe. 1. 22. Chap. 2. 20, 21, 22. Heb. 12. 25.*

Explication.

The principal thing we are to aim at in the worship of God, is the discharge of that duty we owe to Jesus Christ the King and head of the Church, *Heb. 3. 6. Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we, 1 Tim. 3. 15. That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thy self in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God.* This we cannot do unless we consider his authority as the formal reason and cause of our observance of all that we do therein. If we perform any thing in the worship of God on any other account, it is no part of our

our obedience unto him; and so we can neither expect his grace to assist us, nor have we his promise to accept us therein; for that he hath annexed unto our doing and observing whatever he hath commanded, and that because he hath commanded us, *Mat. 28. 20. teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and loe, I am with you alwayes even unto the end of the World.* This promised presence respects only the observance of his commands. Some men are apt to look on this authority of Christ as that which hath the least influence into what they do. If in any of his institutions they find any thing that is suited or agreeable unto the light of nature, as Ecclesiastical societies, government of the Church, and the like they say are, they suppose and contend, that that is the ground on which they are to be attended unto, and so are to be regulated accordingly. The interposition of his authority they will allow only in the *Sacraments* which have no light in reason or nature, so desirous are some to have as little to do with Christ as they can, even in the things that concern the worship of God. But it would be somewhat strange, that if what the Lord Christ hath appointed in his Church to be observed in

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particular, in an especiall manner, for especial ends of his own, hath in the general nature of it an agreement with what in like cases the light of nature seems to direct unto, that therefore his authority is not to be considered, as the sole immediate reason of our performance of it; but it is evident,

First, That our Lord Jesus Christ being the King and Head of his Church, the Lord over the house of God, nothing is to be done therein but with respect unto his authority, Matth. 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him;* Ephes. 4. 15. *Speaking the truth in love, grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joyned supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of it self in love;* Ephes. 2. 20, 21. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom you also are built together for an habitation of God through the spirit.*

Secondly, And that therefore, the suitable-

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tableness of any thing to right reason, or the light of nature, is no ground for a Church observation of it, unless it be also appointed and commanded, in especial by Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, That being so appointed and commanded, it becomes an especial *institution* of his, and as such, is to be observed; so that in all things that are done, or to be done with respect unto the worship of God in the Church, the authority of Christ is alwayes principally to be considered; and every thing to be observed as commanded by him, without which consideration it hath no place in the Worship of God.

Qu. 19. *What is an instituted Church of the Gospel?*

Ans. A society of Persons, called out of the World, or their natural worldly state, by the administration of the Word and Spirit, unto the obedience of the Faith or the knowledge and worship of God in Christ, joyned together in an holy bond, or by special agreement, for the exercise of the communion of Saints in the due observation of all the Ordinances of the Gospel, Rom. 1. 5, 6. 1 Cor. 1. 2. 1 Cor. 14. 15. Heb. 3. 1. James 1. 18. Rev. 1. 20.
1 Pet.

1 Per. 2. 5. Ephes. 2. 21, 22, 23. 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17, 18.

Explication.

The Church, whose nature is here inquired after, is not the *Catholick* Church of elect Believers of all ages and seasons from the beginning of the World unto the end thereof, nor of any one age, nor the *universality* of professors of the Gospel, but a *particular* Church wherein by the appointment of Christ, all the Ordinances of the Worship of God are to be observed and attended unto according to his Will. For although it be required of them, of whom a *particular* Church is constituted, that they be true Believers, seeing that unless a man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, and so on that account they be members of the Church *Catholick*; as also that they make *visible profession* of faith and obedience unto Jesus Christ, yet moreover it is the will, command and appointment of Christ, that they should be joyned together in particular societies, or Churches, for the due observation of the Ordinances of the Gospel, which can alone be done in such Assemblies. For as the members of the *Catholick*

tholick Church, are not known unto one another meerly on the account of that faith and union with Christ which makes them so, whence the whole society of them is, *as such invisible* to the World and themselves, *visible* only on the account of their profession, and therefore cannot meerly as such, observe the Ordinances of the Gospel, which observation is their profession, so the *visible Professors* that are in the World in any age, cannot at any time *assemble* together, which from the nature of the thing it self, and the institution of Christ, is indispensably necessary for the celebration of sundry parts of that worship which he requires in his Church; and therefore particular Churches are themselves an Ordinance of the New Testament, as the *National Church* of the Jews, was of old. For when God of old erected his Worship, and enjoined the solemn observation of it, he also appointed a *Church* as his institution for the due celebration of it. Thus was the people of *Israel* solemnly taken into a Church relation with him by covenant, wherein they took upon themselves, to observe all the laws, and ordinances, and institutions of his worship, *Exod. 20. 19. Speak thou with us, and we will hear.*
Exod.

Exod. 24. 3. *And Moses came, and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the judgements, and all the people answered with one voice, and said, all the words which the Lord hath said we will do,* Deut. 5. 27. *All that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, we will hear it and do it.* And God accordingly appointed them Ordinances to be observed by the whole congregation of them together at the same time, in the same place. Exod. 23. 17. *Three times in the year all thy Males shall appear before the Lord thy God.* Deut. 16. 16. *Three times in a year all thy Males shall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose.*

Neither would God allow any stranger, any one not of the Church so instituted by him, to celebrate any part of his instituted worship, until he was solemnly admitted into that Church as a member thereof; Exod. 12. 47, 48. *All the congregation of Israel shall keep it, and when a stranger shall sojourn with thee and will keep the Passover to the Lord, let all his Males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is born in the Land, for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

To the same end and purpose, when the knowledge of God was to be diffused all the
World

World over, by the preaching of the Gospel, and Believers of all Nations under Heaven were to be admitted unto the Privilege of his Worship, *Ephes. 2. 15, 16, 17, 18.* The National Church of the Jews, with all the Ordinances of it, being removed and taken away, the Lord Christ hath appointed *particular Churches*, or united Assemblies of Believers, amongst and by whom he will have all his holy Ordinances of Worship celebrated. And this institution of his at the first preaching of the Gospel, was invariably and inviolably observed by all that took on them to be his Disciples, without any one instance of questioning it to the contrary in the whole World, or of the celebration of any Ordinances of his Worship amongst any Persons, but only in such Societies or particular Churches. And there is sufficient evidence and warranty of this institution given us in the Scripture: For,

First, They are appointed and approved by Christ, *Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.* *If thy Brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy Brother: But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three Witnesses, every word may be estab-*

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blished; and if he shall neglect to hear, then sell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed also in Heaven. Again, I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven: For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.

Such a Church he supposeth and approveth, as his Disciples had relation unto, and as any one of them could have recourse unto, as a Brother, in obedience to his Commands and Directions. This could not be the Church of the Jews neither in its whole Body, nor in any of its Judicatories: For as at that time, there was a solemn Decree of Excommunication against all and every one that should profess his Name, *Joh. 9. 22.* The Jews had already agreed, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the Synagogue, which was executed accordingly upon the Man that was born blind, *vers. 34.* which utterly disabled them from

from making any use of this Direction, Command, or Institution of his for the present, with respect unto them. So afterwards the chief business of the Rulers of those Assemblies from the highest Court of their *Sanhedrim*, to the meanest Judicatory in their *Synagogues*, was to persecute them, and bring them unto death, *Mat. 10. 17. They will deliver ye up to the Councils, and they will scourge you in their Synagogues. Job. 15. 21.* And it is not likely that the Lord Christ would send his Disciples for direction and satisfaction in the weighty matters of their obedience unto him, and mutual love towards one another, unto them with whom they neither had, nor could, nor ought to have any thing to do withal; and if they were intended, they were all already made as Heathens and Publicans, being cast out by them for refusing to hear them in their blasphemies and persecutions of Christ himself. Such a Society also is plainly intended, as whereunto Christ promiseth his presence by his Spirit, and whose Righteous Sentences he takes upon himself to ratifie and confirm in Heaven.

Moreover such a Church doth he direct unto, as with which his Disciples were to have familiar brotherly constant converse

and communion, with whom they were so to be joyned in society, as to be owned or rejected by them according to their judgement, as is apparent in the practice enjoyned unto them; and without relation whereunto no duty here appointed could be performed. As therefore the very name of the *Church*, and nature of the thing, bespeaks a society, so it is evident that no society but that of a particular Church of the Gospel can be here intended.

Secondly, these Churches he calls his *Candlesticks*; *Rev.* 1. 20. In allusion unto the *Candlesticks* of the Temple, which being an institution of the old Testament, doth directly declare these Churches to be so under the New. And this he speaks in reference unto those *seven particular Churches* of *Asia*, every one of which, was a *Candlestick*, or an institution of his own.

Thirdly, in pursuit of this appointment of Christ, and by his authority, the Apostles so soon as any were converted unto the faith at *Jerusalem*, although the old National Church state of the *Jewes* was yet continued, gathered them into a *Church* or society for celebration of the ordinances of the Gospel. *Act.* 2. 41, 42. *they that gladly received the word, were baptised, and they*
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continued stedfastly together in the Apostles doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. verſe (47) the Lord adding unto this Church dayly ſuch as ſhould be ſaved. And this company is expreſſly called the Church at Jeruſalem. Act. 8. 1. This Church thus called and collected out of the Church of the Jewes, was the rule and pattern of the diſpoſing of all the Diſciples of Chriſt into Church ſocieties in obedience unto his command throughout the World. Act. 11. 26. Act. 14. 23. 27.

Fourthly, they took care for the forming, compleating and eſtabliſhing them in order according to his will, under the rule of them, given and granted unto them by himſelf for that purpoſe, all in a ſteddy purſuit of the commands of Chriſt. Act. 14. 23. they ordained them Elders in every Church. Tit. 1. 5. For this cauſe left I thee in Crete that thou ſhouldeſt ſet in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every City as I had appointed thee. 1 Cor. 12. 28 Eph. 4. 11, 12.

Fifthly, they do every where in the Name, and authority of Chriſt, give unto theſe Churches rules, directions, and precepts for the due ordering of all things relating to the worſhip of God, according to

his minde, as we shall see afterwards in particular; For

First, there is no charge given unto the Officers, Ministers, Guides, or Overseers that he hath appointed, but it is in reference unto the discharge of their duty in such Churches. That Ministers or Officers are of Christs appointment, is expressly declared, Ephes. 4. 11, 12. *He gave some Apostles, some Prophets, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.* 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath set in his Church; first Apostles; secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers.* These are of Christs institution; but to what end? why, as they were ordained in every Church, Act. 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5. So their whole charge is limited to the Churches, Act. 20. 17. *He sent to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the Church, and said to them; Verse the 28. take heed therefore unto your selves, and to all the flock over which the Holy-Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood,* 1 Pet. 5. 2. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God, which is among you taking the oversight thereof,* 1 Tim. 3. 15. Colos. 4. 17. And say to Archippus

chippus take heed to the Ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it. They were the Churches of Christ wherein they ministred, which Christ appointing them to take care of, manifests to be his own institution and appointment. And this is fully declared, *Rev. chap. 2. 3.* where all the dealings of Christ with his *Angels*, or Ministers, are about their behaviour and deportment among his *Candlesticks*, each of them, the Candlestick whereunto he was related, or the particular Churches that they had care of, and presided in; the Candlesticks being no less of the institution of Christ, than the Angels. And they were distinct particular Churches, which had their distinct particular Officers, whom he treateth distinctly withall about his institutions and worship; especially about that of the state of the Churches themselves, and their constitution according to his mind.

Secondly, There is no instruction, exhortation or reproof given unto any of the Disciples of Christ after his ascension, in any of the books of the New Testament, but as they were collected into, and were members of such particular Churches. This will be evidenced in the many instances of those duties that shall afterwards be insisted on.

And the Lord Christ hath not left that as a matter of liberty, choice, or conveniency, which he hath made the foundation of the due manner of the performance of all those Duties whereby his Disciples yield obedience unto his commands, to his glory in the World.

Sixthly, The principal Writings of the Apostles are *expresly* directed unto such Churches, and all of them intentionally, *1 Cor.* 1. 1. *2 Cor.* 1. 1. *Gal.* 1. 2. *Phil.* 1. 1. *Col.* 1. 2. Chap. 4. 16 *1 Thes.* 1. 1. *2 Thes.* 1. 1. *Ephes.* 1. 1. compared with *Act.* 20. 17. *1 Pet.* 5. 2. or unto particular persons, giving directions for their behaviour and duty in such Churches, *1 Tim.* 3. 15. *Tit.* 1. 5. So that the great care of the Apostles was about these Churches, as the principal Institution of Christ, and that whereon the due observance of all his other Commands doth depend. Of what nature or sort these Churches were, shall be afterwards evinced; we here only manifest their institution by the Authority of Christ.

Seventhly, Much of the Writings of the Apostles in those Epistles directed to those Churches, consists in Rules, Precepts, Instructions, & Exhortations for the guidance and preservation of them in purity and order,

der, with their continuance in a condition of due obedience unto the Lord Christ. To this end do they so fully and largely acquaint the Rulers and Members of them with their mutual duty in that especial relation wherein they stand to each other, as also of all persons in particular in what is required of them by vertue of their Membership in any particular Society; as may be seen at large in sundry of *Pauls* Epistles. And to give more strength hereunto, our Lord Jesus Christ, in the revelation that he made of his mind and will personally after his ascension into Heaven, insisted principally about the condition, order and preservation of particular Churches; not taking notice of any of his Disciples not belonging to them, or joyned with them. These he warns, re-proves, instructs, threatens, commands, all in order unto their walking before him in the condition of particular Churches, *Rev.* 2. and 3. at large.

Besides, As he hath appointed them to be the seat and *subject* of all his Ordinances, having granted the right of them unto them alone, *1 Tim.* 3. 15. intrusting them with the exercise of that authority which he puts forth in the Rule of his Disciples in this World, he hath also appointed the most
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holy institution of his *Supper* to denote and express that union and communion which the members of each of these Churches have by his ordinance amongst themselves, 1 Cor. 10. 17. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ? For we being many, are one Bread and one Body, for we are all partakers of that one Bread.* And also he gives out unto them the gifts and graces of his Spirit, to make every one of them meet for, and useful in that place which he holds in such Churches, as the Apostle discourseth at large, 1 Cor. 12. from *vers. 15. to vers. 26. Col. 2. 19. Ephes. 4. 16.* It is manifest then that no Ordinance of Christ is appointed to be observed by his Disciples, no communication of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost is promised to them, no especial Duty is required of them, but with respect unto these Churches of his Institution.

In the answer to this Question, four things are declared tending to the Explication of the nature of a particular Church or Churches.

- (1.) The *subject matter* of them, or the persons whereof such a Church doth or ought to consist. (2.) The *means* whereby they

they are brought into a condition capable of such an Estate, or qualified for it. (3.) The *general ends* of their Calling. (4.) The *especial means* whereby they are constituted a Church; which last will be spoken unto in the next Question.

For the first, All men are by nature the Children of Wrath, and do belong unto the World, which is the Kingdom of Satan, and are under the Power of Darkness, as the Scripture every where declares. In this state men are not Subjects of the Kingdom of Christ, nor meet to become Members of his Church. Out of this Condition they cannot deliver themselves. They have neither will unto it, nor power for it, but they are *called* out of it. This *calling* is that which effectually delivers them from the Kingdom of Satan, and translates them into the Kingdom of Christ. And this work or effect the Scripture on several accounts variously expresseth. Sometimes by Regeneration, or a New Birth, sometimes by *Conversion*, or turning unto God; sometimes by *Vivification*, or quickning from the dead; sometimes by *Illumination*, or opening of the eyes of the blind; all which are carried on by *Sanctification* in Holiness, and attended with Justification and Adoption; And as
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these are all distinct in themselves, having several formal reasons of them, so they all concur to compleat that effectual Vocation or Calling that is required to constitute persons Members of the Church. For besides that this is signified by the typical holiness of the Church of old, into the room whereof real holiness was to succeed under the New Testament, *Exod. 19. 6. Psal. 24. 3, 4, 5, 6. Psal. 15. 1, 2. Isa. 35. 8, 9. Isa. 54. 13. Chap. 60. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 9.* Our Lord Jesus Christ hath laid it down as an everlasting Rule, That unless a man be *born again*, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, *Joh. 3. 3.* requiring Regeneration as an indispensable condition in a Member of his Church, a subject of his Kingdom. For his Temple is now to be built of Living Stones, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* Men spiritually and savingly quickned from their Death in Sin, and by the holy Ghost, whereof they are Partakers, made a meet Habitation for God, *Ephes. 2. 21, 22. 1 Cor. 3. 16. 2 Cor. 6. 16.* which receiving vital supplies from Christ its Head, increaseth in Faith and Holiness, edifying it self in Love, *Ephes. 4. 15, 16.* And as the Apostles in their Writings do ascribe unto all the Churches, and the Members of them, a participation in this effectual Vocation,

tion, affirming that they are *Saints, called, sanctified, justified*, and accepted with God in Christ, *Rom.1.5,6. 1 Cor.1.2. 1 Cor.4.15. Heb.3.1. Jam.1.18. 1 Pet.2.5. 2 Cor.6.17, 18. 1 Cor.6.11.* So, many of the Duties that are required of them in that relation and condition, are such as none can perform unto the glory of God, their own benefit, and the edification of others, (the ends of all obedience) unless they are partakers of this effectual Calling, *1 Cor.10.16,17. 1 Cor.12.12. Ephes.4.16.* Adde hereunto, that these Churches, and the Members of them, are not only commanded to separate themselves as to their Worship of God, from the World, that is, men in their worldly state and condition, but are also required, when any amongst them transgress against the Rules and Laws of this *holy Calling* above described, to cast them out of their Society and Communion, *1 Cor.5.13.* from all which it appears who are the subject matter of these Churches of Christ; as also secondly, the means whereby they come to be so, namely the administration of the Spirit and Word of Christ; and thirdly, the general ends of their Calling, which are all spoken to in this answer.

Quest. 20. *By what means do Persons so Called, become a Church of Christ?*

Ans. They are constituted a Church, and interested in the Rights, Power, and Priviledges of a Gospel-Church, by the Will, Promise, Authority and Law of Jesus Christ, upon their own voluntary consent and engagement to walk together in the due subjection of their Souls and Consciences unto his Authority, as their King, Priest, and Prophet, and in an holy obserbation of all his Commands, Ordinances, and Appointments, Mat. 18. 20. Chap. 28. 18, 19. Act. 2. 41, 42. Exod. 24. 3. Deut. 5. 27. Psal. 110. 3. Isa. 44. 5. Chap. 59. 21. Eph. 4. 7, 8, 9, 10. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Explication.

That the Lord Christ hath constituted such a Church-state as that which we enquire about, hath been proved already. Unto a Church so constituted, he hath also by his Word and Promise annexed all those Priviledges and Powers which we find a Church to be entrusted withall. This he hath done by the standing and unalterable Law of the Gospel, which is the Charter of their

their spiritual Society and Incorporation. Neither are, nor can any Persons be interested in the Rights of a Church any otherwise, but by vertue of this Law and Constitution. This therefore is first to be laid down, That the sole moral foundation of that Church-state which we enquire after, is laid in the Word, Law, and Appointment of Christ. He alone hath authority to erect such a Society, he is the Builder of this House, as well as the Lord over it, *Heb. 3. 3, 6.* neither without it can all the Authority of Men in the World appoint such a state, or erect a Church. And all acceptable actings of men herein, are no other but acts of pure obedience unto Christ.

Farthermore, We have declared that the Lord Christ by the dispensation of his Word and Spirit, doth prepare and fit men to be Subjects of his Kingdom, Members of his Church; the work of sending forth the means of the conversion of the Souls of men, of translating them from the power of darkness into light, he hath taken upon himself, and doth effectually accomplish it in every generation. And by this means he builds his Church, *Mat. 18. 20.* For unto all persons so Called, he gives Command that they shall do and observe whatever he hath

hath appointed them to do, *Mat.28.20.* in particular that they profess their subjection to him, and their obedience in joyning themselves in that state wherein they may be enabled to observe all his other Laws and Institutions, with the whole Worship of God required therein. Being converted unto God by his Word and Spirit, they are to consider how they may now obey the Lord Christ in all things. Amongst his Commands, this of joyning themselves in Church Societies, wherein he hath promised his presence with them, *Mat.18.20.* that is, to dwell amongst them by his Word and Spirit, *Isa.59.21.* is the very first. This by vertue of that Command and Promise of his, they are warranted and enabled to do, nor do they need any other warrant. The authority of Christ is sufficient to bear men out in the discharge of their Duty to him. Being then made willing and ready in the day of his power, *Psal.110.3.* they *consent*, choose and *agree*, to walk together in the observation of all his Commands. And hereby do they become a Church. For their becoming a Church, is an act of their willing obedience unto Christ. This obedience is an act of their Wills, guided by Rule; for this also is necessary, that they proceed here-

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in according to the Rules of his Appointment afterwards to be unfolded. And herein upon their obedience unto the Commands of Christ, and faith in his promises, do Believers by vertue of his Law and Constitution, become a Gospel-Church, and are really and truly interested in all the Power, Rights, and Priviledges, that are granted unto any Church of Christ. For in this obedience they do these two things which alone he requires in any persons for the obtaining of an interest in these Priviledges. First, They *confess* Him, his Person, his Authority, his Law, his Grace. Secondly, They take upon themselves the *observance* of all his Commands.

Thus did God take the Children of *Israel* into a Church-state of old. He proposed unto them the Church-obedience that he required of them, and they voluntarily and freely took upon themselves the performance of it, *Exod. 24. 3. And Moses came and told the People all the words of the Lord, and all the Judgements, and all the People answered with one Voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do. So Deut. 5. 7.* and hereby they had their solemn admission into their Church-state, and relation unto God. And the like

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course they took whenever there was need of renewing their engagements, *Josh. 24. 18. 21, 22.* And the People said, *We will serve the Lord, for he is our God; and Joshua said unto the People, Ye are Witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen the Lord to serve him; and they said, We are Witnesses.* This was the Covenant that was between God and that People, which was solemnly renewed so often as the Church was eminently reformed. Now although the outward solemnity and ceremonies of this Covenant were peculiar unto that People, yet as to the substance and nature of it in a sacred consent for the performance of all those duties towards God and one another, which the nature and edification of a Church do require, it belongs to every Church; as such, even under the Gospel.

And this is the way whereby Believers, or the Disciples of Christ, do enter into this state, the formal constituting cause of any Church. This account doth the Apostle give of the Churches of the Macedonians, *2 Cor. 8. 5.* *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* Before the performance of other duties, and in order thereunto, they first gave themselves to the Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, or took upon themselves the observance of his Commands and Institutions, which is the intendment of that expression. Among these Commands, one was, That they should give up themselves to the Apostles Doctrine, Rule, and Government, in the Order by Christ prescribed, that is in Church-Order. This therefore they did *by the will of God*, according to his will and appointment. This description doth the Apostle give of the way whereby the Believers of *Macedonia* were brought into Churches. It was by their own obedience unto the will of God, consenting, agreeing, and taking upon themselves the observation of all the Commands and Institutions of Christ, according to the direction and guidance of the Apostles. So did the Believers at *Jerusalem*, A&.2.41,42. Being converted by the Word, and making profession of that conversion in their Baptism, they gave up themselves to a stedfast continuance in the observation of all other Ordinances of the Gospel.

Besides, the Church is an House, a Temple, the *House of God*, 1 Tim.3.15. the *House of Christ*, Heb. 3.6. the *Temple of God*, Ephes.2.21,22. Believers singly considered are *Stones*, living *Stones*, 1 Pet.2.5. Now

how shall these *living Stones* come to be an House, a Temple? Can it be by occasional occurrences, civil cohabitation in political precincts, usage or custome of assembling for some parts of Worship in any place? These things will never frame them into a House or Temple. This can be no otherwise done but by their own voluntary consent and disposition, *Ephes. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22.* *Ye are fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord, in whom you also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* Chap. 4. 16. *From whom the whole Body fitly joyned together, and compacted by that which every joynt supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of it self in love.* From these and sundry other places, it is manifest that the way and means of Believers coalition into a Church-state, is their own obedience of Faith, acting it self in a joynt voluntary consent to walk together in an holy observation of the Commands of Christ, whence the being and union

on of a particular Church is given unto any convenient number of them, by his Law and Constitution.

Quest. 21. Seeing the Church is a Society or spiritual incorporation of persons under Rule, Government, or Discipline, declare who or what are the Rulers, Governours, or Officers therein, under Jesus Christ?

Ans. They have been of two sorts, (1.) extraordinary, appointed for a season only, and (2.) ordinary to continue unto the end of the World.

Quest. 22. Who are the extraordinary Officers or Rulers, or Ministers of the Church, appointed to serve the Lord Jesus Christ therein for a season only?

Ans. (1) The Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, with (2) the Evangelists and Prophets indowed with extraordinary Gifts of the holy Ghost, associated with them, and employed by them in their Work and Ministry. (1) Matth. 10. 2, 3. Act. 1. 26. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11. (2) Luk. 10. 1. 2 Tim. 4. 5. Tit. 1. 5. Act. 11. 27, 28. Act. 21. 9, 10. 11. 2 Cor. 1. 1.

Explication.

That the Church is a spiritual *Corporation*, attended with Rule and Government, is evident from the nature of the thing it self, and testimonies of Scripture. Only as the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World, or worldly, so this Rule and Government of the Church, is not meerly external and secular, but spiritual. Neither doth this Rule at all belong unto it, merely as *materially* considered, in men yielding obedience unto the call which is the Foundation of the Church, nor *absolutely* as it is formally constituted a Church by the consent and agreement described, but moreover it is required that it be *organically* compleat with Officers or Rulers. Now to the constitution of such a Society or Corporation, there is required,

First, That the Persons whereof it is constituted do *consent* together into it for the attaining of the ends which they design. Without this no Society of any kind can exist. This is the form of mens coalescence into Societies. And that there is in the Church such a consent and agreement hath been shewed.

Secondly, That there be Rules or Laws
for

for the guidance and direction of all the Members of the Society, in order to their pursuit of the proper ends of it. That such Rules or Laws are given and prescribed by the Lord Christ unto the Church, will afterwards appear in our consideration of them in particular; so that the Church is a Society of men walking according unto Rule or Law, for the attaining of the ends of the Society.

Thirdly, That there be Authority instituted for to see to the due observation of these Rules and Laws of the Society, which consists in this; (1.) That some be appointed to *Rule* and Govern in the Church. (2.) Others to *Obey*, and be Ruled or Governed; both according to the Laws of the Society, and not otherwise. And both these are eminently found in this Church state, as we shall see in the ensuing Questions, with their Answers and Explications.

Now that these Officers or Rulers should be of two sorts, both the nature of the thing it self required, and so hath our Lord Jesus Christ appointed. For when the Church was first to be called, gathered, and erected, it was necessary that *some Persons* should be *extraordinarily* employed in that work; for *ordinary* Officers, antecedent unto the Cal-

ling and erection of the Church, there could be none. And therefore these persons were in an *extraordinary* manner endowed with all that Power which afterwards was to reside in the Churches themselves; and moreover with that which was peculiarly needful unto the discharge and performance of that special duty and work that they were appointed unto. But when Churches were called, gathered, erected, and settled for continuance, there was need of Officers suited to their state and condition, called in an ordinary way; that is, in a way appointed for continuance unto the end of the World; and to be employed in the *ordinary* work of the Church, that is the duties of it, which were constantly incumbent on it by virtue of the Command and Appointment of Christ.

Quest. 23. Who are the ordinary Officers or Ministers of Christ in the Church to be always continued therein?

Ans. Those whom the Scripture calls Pastors and Teachers, Bishops, Elders, and Guides, Act. 14. 23. Act. 20. 17 18. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 1, 2. chap. 5. 17. Tit. 1. 5, 7. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Explication.

Explication.

Several names, are on several accounts, partly designing their authority, partly their duty, and partly the manner of their discharge thereof, assigned in the Scripture, to the ordinary Ministers of the Churches. Sometimes they are called *Pastors* and *Teachers*, Ephes. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Sometimes *Bishops* or *Overseers*, Phil. 1. 1. Act. 20. 28. Tit. 1. 5. Sometimes *Elders*, 1 Pet. 5. 1. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Act. 14. 23. Act. 20. 17. Sometimes *Guides*, Heb. 13. 7, 17. By all which names, and sundry others whereby they are expressed, the same sort, order, and degree of Persons is intended. Nor is any one of these Names applied or accommodated unto any, but all the rest are also in like manner; so that he who is a *Pastor* or a *Teacher*, is also a *Bishop*, or *Overseer*, a *Presbyter* or *Elder*, a *Guide* or *Ruler*, a *Minister*, a servant of the Church for the Lords sake. And of all other names assigned to the Ministers of the Church, that of *Bishop* can least of all be thought to have designed any special Order or Degree of preheminance amongst them. For whereas it is but four times, or in

four

four places used in the New-Testament, as denoting any Officers of the Church, in each of them it is manifest, that those expressed by the other names of Elders and Ministers are intended. So *Act. 20. 28.* the *Bishops* are the *Elders* of the particular Church of *Ephesus*, *vers. 17.* *Phil. 1. 1.* there were many *Bishops* in that one particular Church, who had only *Deacons* joyned with them; that is, they were the *Elders* of it, *Tit. 1. 8.* the *Bishops* were the *Elders* to be ordained, *vers. 5.* which persons are also directly intended, *1 Tim. 3. 2.* as is evident from the coincidence of the directions given by the Apostle about them, and the immediate adjoyning of *Deacons* unto them, *vers. 8.* So that no name could be fixed on with less probability to assert from it a special supream order or degree of men in Ministry, than this of *Bishops*. Neither is there any mention in any place of Scripture of any such preheminance of one sort of these Church-Officers or Ministers over another; not in particular in those places where the Officers of the Church are in an especial manner enumerated, as *1 Cor. 12. 28.* *Eph. 4. 11.* *Rom. 12. 5, 6, 7, 8.* Nor is there any mention of any special Office that should be peculiar unto such Officers, or of any gifts or qualifications that

that should be required in them; or of any special way of calling or setting apart to their Office; nor of any kind of Church that they should relate unto, different from the Churches that other Elders or Pastors do minister in; nor of any special Rule or Direction for their Trial; nor any Command for Obedience unto them, but what are common to all Ministers of the Churches of Christ, duly discharging their trust, and performing their duty; no intimation is given unto either Elders or Ministers to obey them, or directions how to respect them, nor unto them how to behave themselves towards them; but all these things are spoken and deliver'd promiscuously and equally, concerning all Ministers of the Gospel. It is evident then, that these appellations do not belong unto one sort of Ministers, not one more than another; and for what is pleaded by some from the Example of *Timothy* and *Titus*, it is said, That when any persons can prove themselves to be *Evangelists*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. to be called unto their Office upon antecedent prophecy, 1 Tim. 1. 18. and to be sent by the Apostles, and in an especial manner to be directed by them in some employment for a season, which they are not ordinarily to attend unto, *Tit.* 1. 5.

Chap.

Chap. 3. 12. It will be granted that they have another duty and office committed unto them, than those who are only Bishops or Elders in the Scripture.

Quest. 24. What are the principal differences between these two sorts of Officers or Rulers in the Church, extraordinary and ordinary ?

Ans. (1) The former were called to their Office immediately by Jesus Christ in his own Person, or Revelation made by the Holy Ghost in his Name to that purpose; the latter by the suffrage, choice, and appointment of the Church it self. *(2.)* The former both in their Office and Work, were independent on, and antecedent unto all or any Churches, whose calling and gathering depended on their Office, as its consequent and effect; the latter, in both consequent unto the calling, gathering, and constituting of the Churches themselves, as an effect thereof, in their tendency unto compleatness and perfection. *(3.)* The authority of the former being communicated unto them immediately by Jesus Christ, without any interbenient actings of any Church, extended it self equally unto all Churches whateber: that of the latter being deribed unto them from Christ

Christ by the election and designation of the Church, is in the exercise of it confined unto that Church to wherein and where-by it is so deribed unto them. (4.) They differ also in the Gifts which were suited unto their seberal distinct Works and Employments. (1.) Mar. 10. 2. Luk. 10. 1. Gal. 1. 1. Acts 1. 26. Act. 6. 3. Act. 14. 23. (2) Job. 20. 21, 22, 23. Gal. 1. 1. Ephes. 2. 20: Rev. 21. 14. Acts 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5, 7. (3) Mar. 28. 18, 19, 20. 2 Cor. 11. 28. Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Col. 4. 17. (4) 1 Cor. 12. 28, 29, 30. The answer hereunto is such as needs no further Explication.

Quest. 25. What is required unto the due constitution of an Elder, Pastor, or Teacher of the Church?

Ans. (1) That he be furnished with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, for the Edification of the Church, and the Evangelical discharge of the work of the Ministry. (2.) That he be unblameable, holy, and exemplary in his Conversation. (3.) That he have a willing mind to give up himself unto the Lord in the work of the Ministry. (4.) That he be called and chosen by the suffrage and consent of the Church. (5.) That he be solemnly set apart by Fasting and Prayer, and Imposition of hands

hands unto his Work and Ministry. (1) Ephes. 4. 8, 11, 12, 13. (2) Tit. 1. 7, 8, 9. 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. (3) 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. (4) Act. 14. 23. (5) Act. 13. 2. 1 Tim. 5. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 14.

Explication.

Five things are here said to be required unto the due and solemn constitution of a Minister, Guide, Elder, Pastor, or Teacher of the Church; which as they do not all equally belong unto the *essence* of the Call, so they are all indispensably necessary unto him that would be accounted to have taken that Office upon him according to the mind of Christ, and they are plainly expressed in the Scripture.

The first is, That they be furnished with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, for the discharge of the Ministry. The communication of the gifts of the holy Ghost, is the foundation of the Ministry, as the Apostle declares, Ephes. 4. 7, 8, 11, 12, 13. *But unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto Men, and he gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors, and Teachers, for the perfecting*

perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man. And if this were not continued, if the Lord Christ did not continue to give gifts unto men for that end, the Ministry must and would cease in the Church, and all Church-Order and Administrations thereon. The exercise also of these gifts, is required in all them that are called unto sacred Office, 1 Tim. 4. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee.* Hence persons destitute of these gifts of the Spirit, as they cannot in a due manner discharge any one duty of the Ministry, so wanting an interest in that which is the foundation of the Office, are not esteemed of God, as Ministers at all, whatever their outward call may be, Hos. 4. 6. *Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to Me.*

Secondly, Their unblameableness and holiness of conversation, is previously required in them that are to be set apart unto the Ministry. This the Apostle expressly declares, and lays down many particular instances whereby it is to be tryed, Tit. 1. 7, 8, 9. *For a Bishop must be blameless, as the Steward of God, not self-willed, not soon angry, not given*

to Wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre, but a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate, holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers, 1 Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. A Bishop must be blameless, the Husband of one Wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to Wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that ruleth well his own House, having his Children in subjection with all gravity: for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? Not a Novice, lest being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the Devil; moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach, and the snare of the Devil. Not that the particulars here mentioned by the Apostle are only to be considered in the conversation of the Person to be called to the Ministry, but that in an universal holy Conversation these things he requires that he should be eminent in amongst Believers, as those which have an especial respect to his Work and Office. And a failure in any of them, is a just cause or reason to debar any person

person from obtaining a part and lot in this matter. For whereas the especial end of the Ministry is to promote and farther Faith and Holiness in the Church, by the edification of it, how unreasonable a thing would it be, if men should be admitted unto the work of it, who in their own Persons were strangers both unto Faith and Holiness. And herein are the Elders of the Churches seriously to exercise themselves unto God, that they may be an example unto the Flock, in an universal labouring after conformity in their lives unto the great Bishop and Pastor of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thirdly, It is required that such a person have a *willing mind* to give up himself unto God in this work, 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. *The Elders which are among you, I exhort, feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being Lords over Gods heritage, but being Ensamples to the Flock.* Willingness and readiness of mind, are the things here required as a previous qualification unto any mans susception of this Office; and two things doth the Apostle declare to be contrary hereunto.

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First, The undertaking of it by *constraint*, which compriseth every antecedent external impression upon the mind of the undertaker; such are personal outward necessities, compulsions of Friends and Relations, want of other ways of subsistence in the World; all which, and the like, are condemned by the Apostle, as bringing of some *constraint* on the mind, which on other accounts ought to be free and willing; as also all *tergiversation* and backwardness in persons duly qualified and called, on the consideration of difficulties, temptations, streights, perlecutions, is here condemned.

Secondly, An eye and regard unto *filthy lucre* or profit in the World, is proposed as opposite unto the *readiness of mind* which is required in them that are called to this work. An aim in this employment for men by it to advantage themselves in the outward things of this World, without which, it is evident that the whole Work and Office would be neglected by the most of them, who now would be accounted partakers of it, is openly here condemned by the Apostle.

Fourthly, *Election* by the suffrage and consent of the Church is required unto the Calling of a Pastor or Teacher, so that without

out it formally, or virtually given or obtained, the Call however otherwise carried on or solemnized, is irregular and defective. There are but two places in the New Testament where there is mention of the manner whereby any are called in an ordinary way unto any Ministry in the Church; and in both of them there is mention of their election by the community of the Church; and in both of them the Apostles themselves presided with a fulness of Church-power, and yet would not deprive the Churches of that which was their liberty and priviledge. The first of these is *Act. 6.* where all the Apostles together, to give a Rule unto the future proceeding of all Churches in the constitution of Officers amongst them, do appoint the multitude of the Disciples, or community of the Church, to look out from among themselves, or to choose the persons that were to be set apart thereon unto their Office, which they did accordingly, *vers. 2. 3. and 5.* Then the twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables; wherefore Brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and Wisdom; and the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they

chose Stephen, &c. This was done when only *Deacons* were to be ordained, in whom the interest and concernment of the Church is not to be compared with that which it hath in its *Pastors, Teachers, and Elders*. The same is mentioned again, *Act. 14.23.* where *Paul* and *Barnabas* are said to ordain *Elders* in the Churches by their election and suffrage. For the word there used, will admit of no other sense, however it be ambiguously expressed in our translation. Neither can any instance be given of the use of that word, applied unto the communication of any Office or Power to any person or persons in an assembly wherein it denoteth any other action but the suffrage of the multitude; and this it doth constantly in all Writers in the *Greek Tongue*. And hence it was that this right and priviledge of the Church, in choosing of those who are to be set over them in the work of the Lord, was a long time preserved inviolate in the primitive Churches, as the Antients do abundantly testifie. Yea the shew and appearance of it could never be utterly thrust out of the World, but is still retained in those Churches which yet reject the thing it self. And this institution of our Lord Jesus Christ by his Apostles, is suited to the nature of the Church,
and

and of the authority that he hath appointed to abide therein. For as we have shewed before, persons become a Church by their own voluntary consent. Christ makes his subjects willing, not slaves: His rule over them is by his grace in their own wills; and he will have them every way free in their obedience. A Church-state is an estate of absolute liberty under Christ, not for men to do what they will, but for men to do their duty freely, without compulsion. Now nothing is more contrary to this liberty, than to have their Guides, Rulers, and Overseers, imposed on them without their consent. Besides, the body of the Church is obliged to discharge its duty towards Christ, in every institution of his, which herein they cannot, if they have not their free consent in the choice of their Pastors or Elders, but are considered as *mute persons* or brut creatures. Neither is there any other ordinary way of communicating authority unto any in the Church, but by the voluntary submission and subjection of the Church it self unto them. For as all other imaginable ways may fail, and have done so, where they have been trusted unto, so they are irrational, and unscriptural, as to their being a means of the delegation of any power whatever.

Fifthly, Unto this election succeeds the solemn *setting apart* of them that are chosen by the Church unto this Work and Ministry by fasting, prayer, and imposition of the hands of the *Presbyterie*, before constituted in the Church wherein any person is so to be set apart.

Quest. 26. *May a person be called to, or be employed in a part only of the Office or Work of the Ministry, or may he hold the relation and exercise the duty of an Elder or Minister unto more Churches than one at the same time?*

Ans. Neither of these have either warrant or president in the Scripture; nor is the first of them consistent with the authority of the Ministry, nor the latter with the duty thereof, nor either of them with the nature of that relation which is between the Elders and the Church, Act. 14. 23. 1 Per. 5. 2. Act. 20. 28.

Explication.

There are two parts of this Question and Answer, to be spoken unto severally. The first is concerning a person to be called or employed in any Church, in a part only of the

the Office or Work of the Ministry. As suppose a Man should be called or chosen by the Church to administer the Sacraments, but not to attend to the Work of Preaching, or unto the Rule or Guidance of the Church; or in like manner unto any other part or parcel of the work of the Ministry, with an exemption of other duties from his charge or care. If this be done by consent and agreement, for any time or season, it is unwarrantable and disorderly; (what may be done *occasionally* upon an emergency, or in case of weakness or disability befalling any *Elder* as to the discharge of any part of his duty, is not here enquired after.) For,

First, If the Person so called or employed have received gifts fitting him for the whole work of the Ministry, the exercise of them is not to be restrained by any consent or agreement; seeing they are given for the edification of the Church to be traded withall, 1 Cor. 12. 7. *The Manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*; and this, he which hath received such Gifts, is bound to attend unto, and pursue.

Secondly, If he have not received such Gifts as compleatly to enable him unto the discharge of the whole Work of the Ministry in the Church wherein he is to admini-

ster, it is not lawful for the Church to call him unto that work wherein the Lord Christ hath not gone before them in qualifying him for it. Yea, to do so, would be most irregular, for the whole power of the Church consists in its attendance unto the Rule given unto it. And therefore the Office and Work of the Ministry being constituted by the Law of Christ, it is not in the power of the Church to enlarge or streighten the power or duty of any one that is called unto the Office thereof. Neither can or ought any person that is called unto the work of the Ministry to give his consent to the restraint of the exercise of that gift that he hath received in a due and orderly manner, nor to the abridgement of the authority which the Lord Christ hath committed unto the Ministers of the Gospel.

As it is incumbent upon them to take care to preserve their whole authority, and to discharge their whole duty, so arbitrary constitutions of this nature, are irregular, and would bring in confusion into Churches.

The second part of the *Question* is, concerning the Relation of the same person to more Churches than one at the same time, and his undertaking to discharge the duty of his relation unto them, as an Elder

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or Minister. And this also is irregular and unwarrantable. Now a man may hold the relation of an *Elder, Pastor, or Minister* unto more Churches than one, two ways: First, *formally* and directly, by an equal formal interest in them, undertaking the Pastoral Charge equally and alike of them, being called alike to them, and accepting of such a Relation. (2) Virtually; when by vertue of his Relation unto one Church, he puts forth his power or authority in Ministerial acts, in or towards another. The first way is unlawful, and destructive both of the Office and Duty of a Pastor. For as *Elders* are ordained in, and unto the Churches respectively that they are to take care of, *Act. 14. 23. Tit. 1. 5.* And their Office-power consists in a Relation unto the Church that they are set over, so they are commanded to attend unto the service of the Churches wherein, and whereunto, they are so ordained, *Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 1. 2.* and that with all diligence, care, & watchfulness, as those that must give an account, *Heb. 13. 17.* which no man is able to do, towards more Churches than one, the same duties being at all times to be performed towards all. And because the whole authority of the *Elders, Pastors, or Bishops* of Churches

Churches, is ministerial, 1 Cor. 4. 1. consisting in a power of acting upon the Command of Christ, they are bound in their own persons to the discharge of their duty and Office, without the least pretence of authority to *delegate* another, or *others*, to act their part, or to do their duty, which would be an effect of *autocratorical* Authority, and not of Obedience or Ministry. The latter way also of relation unto many Churches is unwarrantable: For (1) It hath no warrant in the Scripture; no Law nor Constitution of Christ or his Apostles, can be produced to give it countenance; but Elders were ordained to their own Churches, and commanded to attend unto them. (2) No *Rule* is given unto any Elders, how they should behave themselves in reference unto more Churches than one, in the exercise of their ministerial power, as there are Rules given unto every one for the discharge of that duty in the Church whereunto he is related. (3) There is no *Example* to give it countenance recorded in the Scripture. (4) The authority to be put forth, hath no foundation. (1) Not in the *Gifts* they have received; for the *ministerial power* is not an absolute ability or faculty of doing what a man is able, but a *right*, whereby a man hath power

power to do that rightly and lawfully, which before he could not do. This, Gifts will not give to any; for if they did, they would do it to all that have received them. (2) Not in their *Election*, for they are chosen in and by that Church whereunto they stand in especial relation, whose choice cannot give ministerial power over any but themselves. (3) Not in their *setting apart* by Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of Hands, for this is only unto that Office, Work and Power, whereunto they are chosen. They are not chosen for one end, and set apart for another. (4) Not from the Communion of Churches, for that gives no new power, but only a due exercise of that which was before received.

Quest. 27. *What are the principal duties of the Pastors or Teachers of the Church?*

Ans. (1) To be examples unto the Flock in Faith, Love, Knowledge, Meekness, Patience, with readiness to suffer for the Name and Gospel of Christ, with Constancy therein. (2) To watch for the Souls, and take care of all the spiritual concerns of the whole Flock committed to them. (3) To preach the Word diligently, dividing it aright. (4) To preserve

preserve and contend for the Truth. (5) To administer all the Ordinances of the Gospel duly and orderly. (6) To stir up and exercise the Gifts they have received in the discharge of their whole Work and Administration of all Ordinances. (7) To instruct, admonish, cherish, and comfort all the Members of the Church, as their Conditions, Occasions, and Necessities do require. (8) To attend with diligence, skill, and wisdom, unto the discharge of that authority which in the rule of the Church is committed unto them. (1) 1 Tim. 3. 10, 11, 13. Chap. 4. 12. 2 Tim. 2. 3. Col. 1. 24. Phil. 2. 17. Chap. 3. 17. (2) Heb. 13. 17. Act. 20. 28. (3) 2 Tim. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Rom. 12. 6, 7, 8. (4) 1 Tim. 6. 20. Act. 20. 28. Jude 3. (5) 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. 1 Tim. 3. 15. (6) 1 Tim. 4. 14, 15, 16. (7) Act. 20. 18, 19, 20, 25, 26. 1 Thes. 3. 5. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. (8) Rom. 12. 8. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

The answer is full and plain.

Quest. 28. *Wherein principally doth the authority of the Elders of the Church consist?*

Ans. (1) In that the Rule of the Church, and the guidance thereof in things appertaining unto the Worship of God, is committed unto them. And therefore,
(2) What-

(2) Whateber they do as Elders in the Church, according unto Rule, they do it not in the name or authorizty of the Church by which their power is deribed unto them, nor as Members only of the Church by their own consent or covenant, but in the Name and Authorizty of Jesus Christ, from whom by vertue of his Law and Ordinance, their Ministerial Office and Power is receibed; so that (3) In the exercise of any act of Church-Power, by and with the consent of the Church, there is an obligation thence proceeding, which ariseth immediatly from that authorizty which they have receibed of Jesus Christ, which is the spring of all rule and authority in the Church. (1) Act. 20. 28. Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Pet. 5. 2. 1 Cor. 12. 28. (2) 1 Tim. 3. 5. Col. 4. 17. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 8. (3) 1 Tim. 4. 11. Tit. 2. 15. 1 Pet. 1. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Explication.

The answer unto this Question explains the Power or Authority of the Elders of the Church, from whom they do receive it, and how it is exercised by them; the right stating whereof is of great importance
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in the whole Discipline of the Church, and must therefore here be farther explained: to this end we may consider,

First, That all Church-power is originally vested in Jesus Christ the sole Head and Monarch thereof. God the Father hath committed it unto him, and intrusted him with it for the accomplishment of his work of mediation, *Mat. 28. 18.*

Secondly, That he doth communicate of this authority by way of trust, to be exercised by them in his Name, unto persons by him appointed, so much as is needful for the ordering and disposing of all things in his Churches, unto the blessed ends for which he hath instituted and appointed them. For no man can have any power in his Church for any end whatsoever, but by *delegation* from him. What is not received from him, is meer usurpation. And whoever takes upon himself the exercise of any Rule, or Authority, or Power in the Church, not granted unto them by him, or not rightly derived from him, is an Oppressor, a Thief, and a Robber. This necessarily follows upon the absolute investiture of all power in him alone, *1 Cor. 12. 28. Ephes. 4. 11, 12.*

Thirdly, The means whereby the Lord Christ communicates this power unto men,

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is by his *Law* and Constitution, whereby he hath granted, ordained and appointed, that such and such powers shall be exercised in his Church, and that by such and such persons, to be derived unto them in such a way and manner; so that the Word of the Gospel, or the Laws and Constitutions of the Lord Christ therein, are the first recipient seat and subject *morally* of all Church-power whatever, *Matth. 16. 19. Matth. 18. 18, 19, 20.*

Fourthly, The way and means whereby any persons come to a participation of this power regularly, according to the mind of Christ, is by the obedience unto, and due observation of his Laws and Commands, in them unto whom they are prescribed. As when an Office, with the power of it, is constituted and limited by the Law of the Land, there is no more required to invest any man in that Office, or to give him that power, than the due observance of the means and way prescribed in the Law to that end. The way then, whereby the *Elders* of the Church do come to participate of the power and authority which Christ hath appointed to be exercised in his Church, is by their and the Churches due observance of the Rules and Laws given by him for their election

tion, and setting apart unto that Office, *Heb. 4. 3. Aët. 14. 24.*

Fifthly, On this account they receive their power from Christ himself alone, and that immediately; for the means used for their participation of it, are not *recipient* of the power it self *formally*, nor do authoritatively collate or confer it, only the Laws of Christ are executed in a way of obedience. So that though they are chosen and set apart to their Office by the *Church*, yet they are made *Overseers* by the *Holy Ghost*, *Aët. 20. 28.* Though they have their power *by* the Church, yet they have it not *from* the Church; nor was that power whereof they are made partakers (as was said) *formally resident* in the body of the Church, before their participation of it; but *really* in Christ himself alone, and *morally* in his Word or Law. And thence is the Rule and Guidance of the Church committed unto them by Christ, *Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Pe. 5. 2. 1 Tim. 3. 5.*

Sixthly, This authority and power thus received from Christ, is that which they exert and put forth in all their ministerial administrations, in all which they do as Ministers in the House of God, either in his Worship, or in the Rule of the Church it self.

self. They exercise that authority of Christ, which he hath in his Law appointed to be exercised in his Church; and from that authority is due order given unto the administration of all the Ordinances of Worship; and an obligation unto obedience to acts of rule doth thence also ensue; so that they which despise them, despise the authority of Christ.

Seventhly, when as Elders they do, or declare any thing in the name of the Church, they do not, *as such*, put forth any authority committed unto them from and by the Church, but only declare the *consent* and determination of the Church in the exercise of their own liberty and priviledge; but the authority which they act by, and which they put forth, is that which is committed to themselves *as such* by Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, this authority is comprised in the Law and constitution of Christ which themselves exert only *ministerially*; and therefore whenever they act any thing *authoritatively*, which they are not enabled for, or warranted in by the Word of the Gospel, or do any thing without, or contrary unto rule, all such actings as to any spiritual effect of the Gospel, or obligation on the consciences of Men, are *Ipso facto*

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null, and are no way ratified in Heaven, where all their orderly actings are made valid; that is, by Christ himself in his Word.

Ninthly, The reason therefore why the *consent* of the Church is required unto the *authoritative* acting of the Elders therein, is not because from thence any *authority* doth accrue unto them anew, which virtually and radically they had not before; but because by the rule of the Gospel this is required to the orderly acting of their power, which without it would be contrary to rule, and therefore ineffectual; as also it must needs be from the nature of the thing it self; for no act can take place in the Church without or against its own consent, whilst its obedience is voluntary and of choice.

But if it be asked, what then shall the Elders do, in case the Church refuse to consent unto such acts as are indeed according to rule, and warranted by the institution of Christ? it is answered, that they are First diligently to *instruct* them from the Word in their duty, making known the minde of Christ unto them in the matter under consideration. (2) To declare unto them the *danger* of their dissent in obstructing

ing the edification of the Body, to the dishonour of the Lord Christ, and their own spiritual disadvantage. (3) To wait patiently for the concurrence of the grace of God with their Ministry, in giving light and obedience unto the Church; and (4) In case of the Churches continuance in any failure of duty, to seek for advice and counsel from the Elders and Brethren of other Churches, all which particulars might be enlarged, would the nature of our present design and work permit it.

Quest. 29. What is the duty of the Church towards their Elders, Pastors, or Teachers?

Ans. (1) To have them in reverence and honour for their office and works sake. (2) To obey them conscientiously in all things wherein they speak unto them in the name of the Lord. (3) To pray earnestly for them, that they may, and to exhort them, if need require, to fulfill the work of the Ministry. (4) To communicate unto them of their temporal for their comfortable subsistence in the world, and usefulness unto others. (5) Wisely to order things by their direction, so as that they may be amongst them without fear. (6) To abide with,

and stand by them, in their sufferings for the Gospel, and service of Christ among them. (1) 1 Thess. 5. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 5. 17. (2) Heb. 13. 17. 1 Cor. 16. 16. (3) Ephes. 6. 18, 19. Coloss. 4. 3. 2 Thess. 3. 1. Coloss. 4. 17. (4) Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 14. (5) 1 Cor. 16. 10. (6) 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17, 18. 2 Tim. 4. 16.

Quest. 30. Are there any differences in the Office, or Offices, of the Guides, Rulers, Elders or Ministers of the Church?

Ans. The Office of them that are Teachers, is one and the same among them all; but where there are many in the same Church, it is the will of Christ that they should be peculiarly assigned unto such especial work in the discharge of their office power, as their gifts received from him do peculiarly fit them for, and the necessities of the Church require. Rom. 12. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 1 Cor. 8. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 10. Chap. 5. 2.

Explication.

The *Office* of them that are to instruct the Church in the name and authority of Christ, is one and the same, as hath been shewed

newed before. And there are many names that are equally accommodated unto all that are partakers of it, as Elders, Bishops, Guides; They are all alike Elders, alike Bishops, alike Guides, have the one office in common amongst them, and every one the whole intire unto himself. But there are names also given unto them, whereby they are distinguished, not as to Office, but as to their work and employment in the discharge of that Office: such are *Pastors* and *Teachers*, Ephes. 4. 11. Which are placed as distinct persons in their work, partakers of the same Office. Now the foundation of this distinction and difference lyes.

First, In the different gifts that they have received; For although it be required in them all, that they have received all those gifts, abilities, and qualifications which are necessary for the work of the Ministry, yet as to the degrees of their participation of their gifts, some may more excell in one, others in another, 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. *There are diversities of gifts; but the same Spirit, and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord: and there are diversities of Operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.*

For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit, &c. and all these gifts are bestowed upon them to be exercised and laid out, for the profit and benefit of the Church; *Vers* the 7. *The manifestation of the spirit is given to every man to profit withall.* And therefore every one is in an especial manner to attend unto the exercise and use of that gift wherein he doth excell; or which tends most to the edification of the Church, every man being to minister according as he hath received, *1 Pet. 4. 10.*

Secondly, It lyes in the nature of the work of the Ministry in the Church, which in general may be referred unto two heads or ends.

First, The *instruction* of it in the knowledge of God in Christ, and the mysteries of the Gospel, that it might grow in grace, wisdom, saving light, and knowledge.

Secondly, The *exhortation* of it to walk answerable unto light received, in holiness, and universal obedience. Now though these several ends of the Ministry cannot be divided or separated, yet they may be distinguished, and so carryed on distinctly, that in the one, knowledge or light may be
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firstly and principally intended, so as to lead unto obedience; in the other, holiness may be firstly designed, as springing from Gospel light or knowledge. Hence therefore are the Elders of the Church principally to attend unto their work or that end of the Ministry, which by the Holy Ghost they are most suited unto. And therefore the Church following the intimations of the Holy-Ghost, in communicating his gifts in variety as he pleaseth, and attending their own edification, may and ought amongst those whom they choose to the Office of Elders or Ministers, withall design them in particular unto that especial work which they are especially fitted and prepared for; and this upon their being chosen, and set apart, they are accordingly to attend unto: *He that teacheth on teaching, he that exhorteth on exhortation;* Rom. 12. 7, 8. Their Office then is the same, but their teaching, work, and employment on the grounds mentioned, distinct and different.

Quest. 31. Are there appointed any Elders in the Church, whose office and duty consist in rule and government only?

Ans. Elders not called to teach ordinarily, or administer the Sacraments, but to assist and help in the rule and government of the Church, are mentioned in the Scripture. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. 1 Tim. 5. 17.

Explication.

This Office of *Ruling Elders* in the Church, is much opposed by some, and in especial by them who have least reason so to do. For first, They object against them, that they are *lay-Elders*, when those with whom they have to do, deny that distinction of the Church into the *Clergy* and *Layity*. For although they allow the distribution of it, into *Officers*, and the *multitude of the Brethren*, yet they maintain that the whole Church is *Gods Clergy*, his lot, and portion, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. Again, they affirm them to be *Elders*, and therein not meerly of the members of the Church, but *Officers* set apart unto their Office according to rule, or the appointment of Christ. And if by *Layity*, the People distinct from the *Officers* of the Church are to be understood, the very term of a *lay Elder* implyes a contradiction, as designing one, who

who *is*, and *is not*, a Church-Officer. Besides, themselves do principally govern the Church by such whom they esteem *Laymen*, as not in holy-Orders; to whom the principal part of its rule, at least in the execution of it is committed, which renders their objection to this sort of Church-Officers unreasonable. Others also have given advantage by making this Office *annual*, or *biennial*, in them that are chosen unto it; which though they plead the necessity of their Churches for, as not having Persons meet for this work and duty, who are willing to undertake it constantly during their lives, without such a contribution for their maintenance as they are not able to afford; yet the wisest of them do acknowledge an irregularity in what they do, and wish it remedied. But this hinders not, but that such Church-Officers are indeed designed in the Scripture, and of whom frequent mention is made in the ancient Writers, and footsteps also, yet remain in most Churches of their institution, though wofully corrupted. For besides, that some light in this matter may be taken from the Church of the *Jews*, wherein the *Elders* of the *People*, were joyned in Rule with the *Priests*, both in the *Sanhedrim*, and all
 lesser

lesser Assemblies; there is in the Gospel
 express mention of persons that were as-
 signed peculiarly for Rule and Government
 in the Church, as 1 Cor. 12. 28. And it is
 in vain pretended that those words, *helps*,
governments, do denote gifts only, seeing
 the Apostle expressly enumerates the *persons*
 in Office, or *Officers*, which the Lord Christ
 then used in the foundation, and Rule of the
 Churches as then planted. He that *ruleth*,
 also is distinguished from him that *teacheth*,
 and him that *exhorteth*, Rom. 12. 8. and is
 prescribed *diligence*, as his principal quali-
 fication in the discharge of his duty. And
 the words of the Apostle to this purpose,
 are *express*, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders*
that rule well, be counted worthy of double
honour, especially those who labour in the
word and doctrine. For the words expressly
 assign two sorts of Elders, whereof some
 only attend unto rule; others moreover
 labour in the Word and Doctrine. Neither
 doth that word, as some would have it, *la-*
bour in the Word, intend any other labour
 but what is incumbent on all the Pastors
 and Teachers of the Church as their con-
 stant duty; see Rom. 6. 12. Acts 20. 35.
 1 Thess. 5. 12. Now can we suppose that
 the Apostle would affirm them to be worthy
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of double honour, whom comparing with others, he notes as *remiss* and *negligent* in their work. For it seems that others were more diligent in the discharge of that duty, which was no less theirs, if only one sort of Elders be here intended. The Scripture is not wont to *command* such persons as worthy of *double honour*, but rather to propose them as meet for double shame and punishment, *Jer.* 48. 10. *I Cor.* 9. 16. And they are unmindefull of their own interest, who would have *Bishops* that attend to the rule of the Church, to be distinctly intended by the *Elders* that *rule* well; seeing the Apostle expressly preferreth before and above them, those that attend constantly to the Word and Doctrine. And besides what is thus expressly spoken concerning the appointment of this sort of Elders in the Church, their *usefulness* in the necessity of their work, and employment, is evident. For whereas a constant care in the Church, that the conversation of all the members of it be such as becometh the Gospel, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be not evil spoken of, is of great concernment and importance, and the *Pastors* and Teachers, being to give up themselves continually unto prayer, and the *Ministry of the word*, cannot

not attend unto the constant and daily oversight thereof, the usefulness of these Elders, whose proper and peculiar work it is to have regard unto the holy walking of the Church, must needs be manifest unto all. But whereas in most Churches, there is little or no regard unto the *personal holiness* of the members of them, it is no wonder that no account should be had of them who are ordained by the Lord Christ to look after it and promote it.

The qualifications of these *Elders*, with the way of their call and setting apart unto their Office, being the same with those of the *Teaching Elders* before insisted on, need not be here again repeated. Their authority also in the whole rule of the Church, is every way the same with that of the other sort of Elders, and they are to act in the execution of it with equal respect and regard from the Church. Yea the business of *rule*, being peculiarly committed unto them, and they required to attend thereunto with *diligence* in an especial manner, the work thereof is principally theirs; as that of *labouring in the word and doctrine* doth especially belong unto the Pastors and Teachers of the Churches. And this Institution is abused, when either un-

meet

meet persons are called to this Office, or those that are called, do not attend unto their duty with *diligence*, or do act only in it by the guidance of the Teaching Officers, without a sense of their own authority, or due respect from the Church.

Quest. 32. *Is there no other ordinary Office in the Church, but only that of Elders?*

Ans. Yes of Deacons also.

Quest. 33. *What are the Deacons of the Church?*

Ans. Approved men, Chosen by the Church to take care for the necessities of the poor belonging thereunto, and other outward occasions of the whole Church, by the collection, keeping, and distribution of the Alms, and other supplies of the Church, set apart and commended to the grace of God therein, by Prayer. Acts 6. 3, 5, 6. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Explication.

The Office of the *Deacon*, the nature, end, and use of it, the qualification of the persons to be admitted unto it, the way
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and manner of their Election and setting apart ; are all of them plainly expressed in the Scripture, Acts 6. 1, 2, 3. There arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because the Widdows were neglected in the daily ministration ; then the Twelve called the multitude of the Disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the Word of God, and serve Tables ; wherefore Brethren, lock ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy-Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business, and the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, &c. whom they set before the Apostles, and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Likewise must the Deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much Wine, not given to filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the Faith in a pure Conscience ; and let these also first be proved, then let them use the Office of a Deacon, being found blameless ; the Husbands of one Wife, ruling their Children, and their own house well ; for they that have used the Office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus. These things are thus plain and express

press in the Scripture. But whereas many have grown weary of the observation of the institutions of the Gospel, this Office hath for a long time been lost amongst the most of Christians. By some the name is retained, but applyed to another work, duty, and employment than this to which it is peculiarly appropriated in the Scripture. Their proper and original work of taking care for the poor, they say, is provided for by others; and therefore that office being needless, another, unto another purpose, under the same name, is erected. Such are Deacons that may *read Service, Preach* and Baptise, when they have license thereunto. But this choice, to reject an Office of the appointment of Christ, under pretence of provision made for the duties of it another way, and the erecting of one not appointed by him, seems not equall. But whereas it is our duty in all things to have regard to the authority of Christ and his appointments in the Gospel, if we claim the priviledge of being called after his name, some think that if what he hath appointed may be colourably performed another way without respect unto his Institutions, that is far the best. But omitting the practice of other Men, the things that
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concern this Office in the Church, are as was said, clear in the Scripture.

First, The persons called unto it are to be of *honest report*, furnished with the gifts of the Holy-Ghost, especially with *wisdom*, Acts 6. 3. And those other endowments usefull in the discharge of their duty mentioned, 1 Tim. 3. 8.

Secondly, The way whereby they come to be made partakers of this Office, is by the choice or *election* of the Church, Acts 6. 2, 3, 5. whereupon they are solemnly to be set apart by Prayer.

Thirdly, Their work or duty consists in a daily ministration unto the necessities of the poor *Saints*, or Members of the Church, *Verf.* 1, 2.

Fourthly, To this end that they may be enabled so to do, it is ordained, that every *first day* the Members of the Church do contribute according as God enables them of their substance, for the supply of the wants of the poor, 1 Cor. 16. 2. And also *occasionally*, as necessity shall require, or God move their hearts by his grace.

Fifthly, Hereunto is to be added whatever by the Providence of God may be conferred upon the Church for its outward

ward advantage, with reference unto the end mentioned, *Acts* 4. 34, 35.

Sixthly, These supplies of the Church being committed to the care and charge of the *Deacons*, they are from thence to minister with *diligence* and *wisdom* unto the necessities of the poor; that so the needy may be supplied, that there may be none that lack; the *rich* may contribute of their riches according to the mind of Christ, and in obedience unto his command, that they which minister well in this office, may purchase to themselves a good degree, and boldness in the faith, and that in all, the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified with praise and thanksgiving.

It belongs therefore unto Persons called unto this Office,

First, To acquaint themselves with the *outward condition* of those that appear to be poor and needy in the Church, whether by the addresses of such poor ones, who are bound to make known their wants, occasions, and necessities unto them, or by the information of others or their own observation.

Secondly, to acquaint the Elders and the Church as occasion requireth with the necessities of the poor under their care, that

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those who are able may be stirred up by the Elders, to a free supply and contribution.

Thirdly, To dispose what they are entrusted with *faithfully*, cheerfully, tenderly, without *partiality* or preferring one before another, for any outward respect whatsoever.

Fourthly, To keep and give an account unto the Church when called for, of what they have received, and how they have disposed of it, that so they may be known to have well discharged their Office; that is with care, wisdom and tenderneſſe, whereby they procure to themselves a good degree with boldneſſe in the Faith, and the Church is encouraged to entrust them further with this sacrifice of their Alms, which is so acceptable unto God.

Quest. 24. Wherein consists the general duty of the whole Church, and every member thereof in their proper station and condition?

Ans. In performing, doing, and keeping inviolate all the commands and institutions of Jesus Christ, walking unblameably and fruitfully in the world, holding forth the word of truth, and glorifying the Lord Christ in and by the profession of his name, and keeping his
testi-

testimony unto the end. Matth. 28. 20.
Acts 2. 42. Phil. 2. 15, 16. Chap. 4. 8,
9. 1 Thess. 3. 8. 1 Pet. 4. 10, 11, 12, 13,
14. 1 Tim. 3. 15. Heb. 10. 23.

Explication.

Besides the general duties of Christianity incumbent on all Believers, or Disciples of Christ as such, there are sundry especial duties required of them as *gathered* into Church Societies, upon the account of an especial trust committed unto them in that state and condition; For,

First, The Church being appointed as the seat and subject of all the institutions of Christ, and ordinances of Gospel-worship, it is its duty, that is, of the whole body and every member in his proper place, to use all care, watchfulness and diligence, that all the commands of Christ be kept inviolate, and all his institutions observed, according to his mind and will. Thus those *added to the Church, Acts 2. 42.* Together with the whole Church, *continued stedfastly* (which argues care, circumspection and diligence) *in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and breaking of Bread and Prayers;* Which principal duties are enumerated,

to express their respect towards all. This is their *standing fast in the Lord*, which was a matter of such joy to the Apostle when he found it in the *Thessalonians*; 1 Ep. 3. 8. *For now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.* That order and steadfastness which he rejoyced over in the *Colossians*; Chap. 2. 5. *For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.* And where this duty is despised, men contenting themselves with what is done by others, there is a great neglect of that *faithfulness* in obedience which the Church owes unto Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the *Glory* of the Lord Christ, and the doctrine of the Gospel to be manifested in, and by the power of an holy exemplary conversation, is committed unto the Church and all the members of it. This is one end wherefore the Lord Christ calls them out of the World, separates them to be a peculiar people unto himself, brings them forth unto a visible profession, and puts his name upon them, namely that in their walking, and conversation, he may shew forth the holiness of his doctrine, and power of his spirit, grace, and example to
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effect in them all holiness, godliness, righteousness and honesty in the World. Hence are they earnestly exhorted unto these things. Phil. 4. 8, 9. *Brethren whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any vertue, if there be any praise, think on these things ; and that to this end, that the doctrine of the Gospel may be adorned and Christ glorified in all things ; Tit. 2. 10. And those who fail herein are said to be Enemies of the cross of Christ ; Phil. 3. 18 ; As hindring the progress of the doctrine thereof, by representing it undesirable in their conversation. This also therefore, even the duty of universal holiness, with an especial regard unto the honour of Christ, and the Gospel which they are called and designed to testify and express in the World, is incumbent on the Church, and every member of it ; namely as the Apostle speaks, that they be blameless, and harmless, the sons of God, without rebukes in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom they are to shine as lights in the World, Phil. 2. 15.*

Thirdly, the care of *declaring* and manifesting the *truth* is also committed unto them. Christ hath made the Church to be the *pillar and ground of truth*. 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. where the truth of the Gospel is to be firmly *seated*, founded, fixed, established, and then *lifted up* in the wayes of Christs appointment to be seen, discerned, and known by others. And as this is done *principally* in the preaching of the Gospel by the *Elders* of the Church, and in their contending for the Truth once delivered unto the Saints, *Jude* 3. So it is also the duty of the whole Church, to *hold forth the word of life*, *Phil.* 2. 16. by ministring of the gift that *every man* hath received; 1 *Pet.* 4. 10. In the way of Christs appointment. In these, and the like instances, doth our Lord Jesus require of his Church that they exprels in the World their subjection unto him, and his authority; and that they abide therein unto the end, against all opposition whatever.

The sinful neglect of Churches in the discharge of their duty herein, was one great means of that *Apostacy* from the rule of the Gospel which they generally of old fell into. When the members of them began to think that they had no advantage by their

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state and condition, but only the outward participation of some Ordinances of Worship, and no duty incumbent on them, but only to attend and follow the motions and actings of their Guides, the whole Societies quickly became corrupt, and fit to be disposed of according to the carnal interest of those that had by their neglect and sin, gotten dominion over them. And at all times, as the people were negligent in their duty, the Leaders of them were apt to usurp undue authority. When the one sort will not do that which they ought, the other are ready to take upon them what they ought not. It is a circumspect performance of duty on all hands alone, that will keep all sorts of persons in the Church within those bounds, and limits, and up to those rights, and priviledges, which Christ hath allotted and granted unto them. And herein alone doth the order, honour, and beauty of the Church consist. Church-members therefore are to search and enquire after the particular duties, which as such, are incumbent on them; as also to consider what influence their special state and condition as they are Church-members, ought to have into all the duties of their obedience as they are Christians.

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For this priviledge is granted unto them for their *edification*, that is their fartherance in their whole course of walking before God. And if this be neglected, if they content themselves with a *name to live* in this or that Church, to partake of the Ordinances that are stated and solemnly administred only, that which would have been to their advantage, may prove to be a snare and temptation unto them. What these especial duties are in the particular instances of them, is of too large a consideration here to be insisted on. Besides it is the great duty of the Guides of the Church, to be inculcating of them into the minds of those committed to their charge: For the Churches due performance of its duty, is their honour, Crown, and reward.

Q^v. 35. Whence do you reckon prayer, which is a part of moral and natural worship, among the institutions of Christ in his Church?

An. On many accounts; as (1) because the Lord Christ hath commanded his Church to attend unto the worship of God therein. (2) because he bestows on the Ministers of the Church, gifts and ability of prayer for the benefit and edification thereof.

thereof. (3) he hath appointed that all his other ordinances should be administered with prayer, whereby it becomes a part of them. (4) because himself ministers in the holy place, as the great High-Priest of his Church to present their prayers unto God at the throne of grace. (5) because in all the prayers of the Church, there is an especial regard had unto himself, and the whole work of his mediation. (1) Luke 18.1. Chap. 21. 36. Rom. 12.5. 1 Tim. 2. 1, 2. (2) Eph. 4.8, 12, 13. Rom. 8.15, 16. Gal. 4. 6. (3) Acts 2. 42. 1 Tim. 4. 5. (4) Rev. 8. 3, 4. Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. Chap. 6. 20. Chap. 10. 20, 21, 22. (5) Job. 14. 13. Chap. 15. 16, 22, 26. Eph. 3. 14, 15.

Qu. 36. May not the Church in the solemn worship of God, and celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel, make use of, and content it self in the use of forms of prayer in an unknown tongue composed by others and pre'cribed unto them.

An. So to do would be ; (1) contrary to one principal end of prayer it self, which is that Believers may therein apply themselves to the throne of spiritual grace for supplies according to the present condition, wants, and exigencies of their souls. (2) to the
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main end that the Lord Jesus Christ aimed at in supplying men with gifts for the discharge of the work of the Ministry, tending to render the promise of sending the Holy Ghost, which is the immediate cause of the Churches preservation and continuance, needless, and useless. Moreover (3) It will render the discharge of the duty of Ministers unto several precepts and exhortations of the Gospel, for the use, stirring up and exercise of their gifts impossible, and (4) thereby hinder the edification of the Church, the great end of all Ordinances and Institutions. (1) Rom. 8. 26. Phil. 4. 6. Heb 4. 16. 1 Per. 4. 7. (2) Ephes. 4. 8, 12, 13. (3) 1 Tim. 4. 14. 2 Tim. 1. 6, 7. Coloss. 4. 17. Matth. 25. 14, 15, 16. (4) 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Quest. 37. Is the constant work of Preaching the Gospel by the Elders of the Church, necessary?

Ans. It is so, both on the part of the Elders or Ministers themselves, of whom that duty is strictly required, and who principally therein labour and watch for the good of the flock; and on the part of the Church, for the furtherance of their faith, and obedience, by instruction, re-
proof,

proof, exhortation, and consolation. Matth. 24. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51. Rom. 12. 7, 8. 1 Cor. 9. 17, 18. Ephes. 4. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16. Chap. 5. 17. 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. Chap. 3. 14, 15, 16, 17. Chapter 4. 2.

Quest. 38. *Who are the proper subjects of Baptism?*

Ans. Professing Beliebers, if not baptised in their infancy, and their Infant seed. Matth. 28. 19. Acts 2. 38, 39. Acts 16. 33. 1 Cor. 1. 16. 1 Cor. 7. 14. Coloss. 2. 12, 13. With *Genesis* 17. 10, 11, 12.

Quest. 39. *Where, and to whom, is the Ordinance of the Lords Supper to be administred?*

Ans. In the Church, or Assembly of the congregation, to all the Members of it, rightly prepared, and duly assembled, or to such of them as are so assembled. 1 Cor. 11. 20, 21, 22, 28, 29, 33. Acts 2. 46.

Quest. 40. *How often is that Ordinance to be administred?*

Ans. Every First day of the week, or at least as often as opportunity, and conveniency may be obtained. 1 Cor. 11. 26. Acts 20. 7.

Quest.

Quest. 41. *What is the Discipline of the Church.*

Ans. It consists in the due exercise of that authority and power which the Lord Christ in and by his Word hath granted unto the Church, for its continuance, increase, and preservation, in purity, order, and holiness according to his appointment, Matth. 16. 19. Rom. 12. 8. 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5, 6. Rev. 2. 2, 20.

Explication.

Sundry things are to be considered about this discipline of the Church; as

First, The *foundation* of it, which is a grant of power and authority made unto it by Jesus Christ, as Mediator, Head, King, and Law-giver of his Church. For all *discipline* being an act of power, and this being exercised in and about things internal, and spiritual, no men can of themselves, or by grant of any others, have any right or authority to, or in the exercise thereof. Whoever hath any interest herein, or right hereunto, it must be granted unto him from above, by Jesus Christ, and that as Mediator and head of his Church. For as all
Church

Church power, is in an especial manner by the authority and grant of the Father vested in him alone, *Matth.* 28. 18. *Ephes.* 1. 20, 21, 22, 23. So the *nature* of it which is *spiritual*, the *object* of it which are the Consciences and Gospel priviledges of Believers, with the *ends* of it, namely the glory of God in Christ, with the spiritual and eternal good of the souls of men, do all manifest that it can have no other right nor foundation. This in the first place is to be fixed, that no authority can be exercised in the Church, but what is derived from Jesus Christ, as was spoken before.

Secondly, The *means* whereby the Lord Christ doth communicate this power and authority unto his Church, is his *word* or his *law* and constitution concerning it in the Gospel; so that it is exactly limited and bounded thereby. And no power or authority can be exercised in the Church, but what is granted and conveyed unto it by the word; seeing that Christ communicates no power or authority any other wayes. What ever of that nature is beside it, or beyond it, is meer usurpation, and *null* in its exercise. Herein is the commission of the Guides and Rules of the Church, expressed, which they are not to exceed in any

any thing. Herein are bounds and limits fixed to the actions of the whole Church, and of every part and member of it.

Thirdly, This power or authority, thus granted, and conveyed by Jesus Christ, is to be exercised as to the *manner* of the administration of discipline, with *skill and diligence*; Rom. 12. 6. 1 Cor. 12. and the skill required hereunto, is a gift, or an ability of minde bestowed by the Holy-Ghost upon men to put in execution the Laws of Christ, for the government of the Church, in the way and order by him appointed; or a *spiritual wisdom* whereby men know how to behave themselves in the House of God, in their several places, for its due edification in faith and love, 1 Tim. 3. 15. And this ability of minde to make a due application of the Laws of the Gospel unto persons, times, and actions with their circumstances, is such a gift of the Holy-Ghost, as whereof there are several degrees answering to the distinct duties that are incumbent on the *Rulers* of the Church on the one hand, and *Members* on the other. And where this skill and wisdom is wanting, there it is impossible that the *Discipline* of the Church, should be preserved or carryed on. Hereunto also diligence and watchfulness

fulness are to be added, without which ability and power will never obtain their proper end in a due manner, *Rom.* 12.6,7,8.

Fourthly, the *end* of this *discipline* is the continuance, increase, and preservation of the Church, according to the rule of its first institution, *1 Cor.* 5.7. This power, hath Christ given his Church, for its conservation, without which it must necessarily decay, and come to nothing. Nor is it to be imagined that where any Church is called and gathered according to the minde of Christ, that he hath left it destitute of power and authority to preserve it self, in that state and order which he hath appointed unto it. And that which was one principal cause of the decayes of the *Asian* Churches, was the neglect of this *Discipline*, the power and priviledge whereof, the Lord had left unto them and intrusted them withall, for their own preservation in order, purity and holiness. And therefore for the neglect thereof they were greatly blamed by him. *Rev.* 2. 14, 15, 20. *Chap.* 3. 2. as is also the Church of *Corinth* by the Apostle, *1 Cor.* 5.2. as they are commended, who attended unto the diligent exercise of it, *Revel.* 2. 2. *Chap.* 3. 9. The disuse also of it, hath been the occasion
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of all the defilements, abominations and confusions, that have spread themselves over many Churches in the World.

Quest. 42. Unto whom is the power and administration of this Discipline committed by Jesus Christ?

Ans. As to the authority to be exerted in it in the things wherein the whole Church is concerned, unto the Elders; as unto tryall, judgement and consent in, and unto its exercise unto the whole Brotherhood; as unto love, care, and watchfulness in private and particular cases, to every member of the Church. Mat. 24. 45. Ephes. 4. 13, 14. Acts 20. 28. 1 Tim. 3. 5. Chap. 5. 17. Heb. 13. 17. 1 Per. 2. 3. 1 Thes. 5. 12. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 4. 14. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8. 2 Tim. 4. 2.

Explication.

It hath been shewed that this power is granted unto the Church by virtue of the Law and constitution of Christ. Now this Law assigns the means and way whereby any persons do obtain an interest therein; and makes the just allotments to all concerned in it. What this Law, Constitution

or

or Word of Christ assigns unto any, as such, that they are the first seat and subject of, by what way or means soever they come to be intrusted therein. Thus that power or authority which is given unto the Elders of the Church, doth not first *formally* reside in the body of the Church unorganized or distinct from them, though they are called unto their Office by their suffrage and choice; but they are themselves as such, the first subject of Office-power; For so is the Will of the Lord Christ. Nor is the interest of the whole Church in this power of discipline whatever it be, given unto it by the Elders, but is immediately granted unto it, by the will and Law of the Lord Jesus.

First, In this way and manner the Authority above described, is given in the first place, as such, unto the *Elders* of the Church. This authority was before explained, in answer unto the 28th Question, as also was the way whereby they receive it. And it is that power of office whereby they are enabled for the discharge of their whole duty, in the teaching, and ruling of the Church, called the *power of the keyes*, from *Mat. 16. 19.* Which expression being *Metaphorical*, and in general lyable unto many

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interpre-

interpretations, is to be understood according to the declaration made of it in those particular instances wherein it is expressed. Nor is it a twofold power or Authority that the Elders of the Church have committed unto them; one to teach, and another to rule, commonly called the power of order, and of jurisdiction; but it is *one power of Office*, the duties whereof are of several kinds, referred unto the two general heads, first of *teaching* by preaching the Word and celebration of the Sacraments, and (2) Of *rule* or government. By virtue hereof, are they made *Rulers* over the house of God, *Matth. 24. 45. Stewards* in his house, *1 Cor. 4. 1. Overseers* of the Church, *Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 2. Guides* unto the Church, *Heb. 13. 7, 17*. Not that they have a supream or *autocratorical* power committed unto them, to enable them to do what seems right and good in their own eyes, seeing they are expressly bound up unto the terms of their Commission, *Matth. 28. 19, 20. To teach men to do and observe all, and only what Christ hath commanded*; nor have they by virtue of it, any dominion in, or over the Church, that is, the laws, rules or priviledges of it, or the consciences of the Disciples of Christ, to
alter,

alter, change, add, diminish, or binde by their own authority, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. *Mark* 10. 42, 43, 44. But it is a power meerly ministerial, in whose exercise they are unto the Lord Christ accountable *servants*, *Heb.* 13. 17. *Matth.* 24. 45. And Servants of the Church for Jesus sake, 2 *Cor.* 4. 5. This authority in the Discipline of the Church they exert and put forth by virtue of their Office; and not either as declaring of the power of the Church it self, or acting what is delegated unto them thereby, but as ministerially exercising the authority of Christ committed unto themselves.

Secondly, The body of the Church, or the multitude of the Brethren, (women being excepted by especial prohibition, 1 *Cor.* 14. 34, 35. 1 *Tim.* 2. 11, 12.) Is by the Law and constitution of Christ in the Gospel, interested in the administration of this power of discipline in the Church, so far as,

First, To consider, try, and make a judgement, in and about all persons, things, and causes, in reference whereunto it is to be exercised. Thus the Brethren at *Jerusalem* joyned in the consideration of the observation of *Mosaical ceremonies* with the Apostles and Elders, *Act.* 15. 23. And the multitude of them to whom letters were

sent about it, likewise did the same, *Verse* the 30, 31, 32. And this they thought it their duty and concernment to do, *Chap.* 21, 22. And they are blamed, who applyed not themselves unto this duty, *1 Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 6. Thence are the Epistles of *Paul* to the Churches to instruct them in their duties, and priviledges in Christ, and how they ought to behave themselves in the ordering of all things amongst them according to his minde. And these are directed unto the Churches themselves, either joyntly with their Elders, or distinctly from them, *Phil.* 1. 1. And the whole preservation of Church-order, is on the account of this duty recommended unto them. Neither can what they do in compliance with their Guides and Rulers, be any part of their obedience unto the Lord Christ, unless they make previously thereunto a rational consideration and judgement by the rule, of what is to be done. Neither is the Church of Christ to be ruled without its knowledge, or against its will; nor in any thing is blinde obedience acceptable to God.

Secondly, The *Brethren* of the Church are intrusted with the priviledge of giving and testifying their consent unto all acts
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of Church power, which though it belong not *formally* unto the authority of them, it is necessary unto their validity and efficacy; and that so far forth as that they are said to do and *act* what is done and effected thereby, 1 Cor. 5. 4, 13. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8. And they who have this priviledge of *consent* which hath so great an influence into the action and validity of it, have also the liberty of dissent; when any thing is proposed to be done, the *warrant* whereof from the Word and the *rule* of its performance, is not evident unto them.

Qu. 43. *Wherein doth the exercise of the authority for Discipline committed unto the Elders of the Church consist?*

Ans. (1) In personal private admonition of any member or members of the Church, in case of sin, error, or any miscarriage known unto themselves. (2) In publick admonition, in case of offences persisted in and brought orderly to the knowledge and consideration of the Church. (3.) In the ejection of obstinate offenders from the society and communion of the Church. (4) In exhorting, comforting, and restoring to the enjoyment and exercise of Church-

priviledges such as are recovered from the error of their wayes; all according to the lawes, rules, and directions of the Gospel. (1) Matth. 18. 15. 1 Theff. 5. 14. 1 Cor. 4. 14. Titus 1. 13. Chap. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 2. (2) 1 Tim. 5. 19, 20. Matth. 18. 16, 17. (3) Titus 3. 10. 1 Tim. 1. 20. Matth. 18. 17. 1 Cor. 5. 5. Gal. 5. 12. (4) 2 Cor. 2. 7. Gal. 6. 1. 2 Theff. 3. 15.

Q^y. 44. May the Church cast any Person out of its communion without previous admonition?

Ans. It may in some cases, where the offence is notorious, and the scandal grievous, so that nothing be done against other general rules. 1 Cor. 4.

Q^y. 45. Wherin doth the liberty and duty of the whole Brotherhood in the exercise of Discipline in the Church in particular consist?

Ans. (1.) In a meek consideration of the condition and temptations of offenders, with the nature of their offences, when orderly proposed unto the Church. (2.) In judging with the Elders according to rule, what in all cases of offence is necessary to be done, for the good of the
offen-

offenders themselves, and for the edification and vindication of the whole Church.

(3) In their consent unto, and concurrence in the admonition, ejection, pardoning and restoring of offenders, as the matter shall require. Gal. 6. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 5. 2, 4, 5, 12. 1 Cor. 6. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 6, 7, 8.

Q^v. 46. *What is the duty of private Members in reference unto the discipline appointed by Christ in his Church?*

Aⁿ. It is their duty in their mutual watch over one another, to exhort each other unto holiness and perseverance; and if they observe any thing in the ways and walkings of any of their fellow Members not according unto the rule, and the duty of their profession, which therefore gives them offence, to admonish them thereof in private with love, meekness and wisdom, and in case they prebail not unto their amendment, to take the assistance of some other Brethren in the same work; and if they fail in successe therein also, to report the matter by the Elders direction, unto the whole Church. Matth. 18. 16, 17, 18. 1 Thess. 5. 14.

Explication.

In these questions an enquiry is made after the exercise of the discipline in the Church, as to that part of it which belongs unto the reproof and correction of miscarriages according to the distribution of right, power, and priviledge, before explained.

The first act hereof consists in *private admonition*; for so hath our Lord ordained, that in case any Brother, or member of the Church, do in any thing walk disorderly, and not according to the rule of the Gospel, that he, or they, unto whom it is observed, and who are thereby offended, may and ought to admonish the person or persons so offending of their miscarriage and offence, concerning which is to be observed,

First, what is previously required thereunto; and that is,

First, that in all the Members of the Church there ought to be *love without dissimulation*. They are to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, *Rom. 12. 9, 10.* which as they are taught of God, so they are greatly exhorted thereunto; *Heb. 13. 1.* This love is the
bond

bond of perfection, the most excellent way and means of preserving Church order, and furthering the edification thereof. 1 *Cor.* 13. Without which, well seated, and confirmed in the hearts and minds of Church-members, no duty of their Relation can ever be performed in a due manner.

Secondly, this love is to exert and put forth it self in tender care and watchfulness for the good of each other, which are to work by mutual exhortations, informations, instructions, according as opportunities do offer themselves, or as the necessities of any do seem to require. *Heb.* 3. 13. *Chap.* 10. 24.

Secondly, this duty of admonishing offenders privately and personally, is common to the Elders with all the members of the Church; neither doth it belong properly unto the Elders as such, but as Brethren of the same society. And yet by virtue of their office the Elders are enabled to do it with more Authority morally, though office power properly be not exercised therein. By virtue also of their constant general watch over the whole flock in the discharge of their office, they are enabled to take notice of, and discern miscarriages in any of the members, sooner than others. But as to the exercise
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of the discipline of the Church in this matter, this duty is equally incumbent on every member of it, according as the obligation on them to watch over one another, and to exercise especial love towards each other is equal: Whence it is distinguished from that private *pastoral* admonition, which is an act of the teaching office and power, not directly belonging unto the rule or government enquired after. But this admonition is an effect of love and where it proceedeth not from thence, it is irregular, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17, 18. *Rom.* 15. 14.

Thirdly, this duty is so incumbent on every member of the Church, that in case of the neglect thereof, he both sinneth against the Institution of Christ, and makes himself partaker of the sin of the party offending, and is also guilty of his danger, and ruine thereby, with all that disadvantage which will accrue to the Church, by any of the members of it continuing in sin against the rule of the Gospel. They have not only *liberty* thus to admonish one another, but it is their express and indispensable duty so to do. The neglect whereof is interpreted by God to be *hatred of our Brother*; such as wherewith the love
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of God is inconsistent, *Levit. 19, 17. 1 John 4. 20. Chap. 3. 15.*

Fourthly, although this duty be personally incumbent on every individual member of the Church, yet this hinders not but if the sin of an offender be known to more than one at the same time, and they joyntly take offence thereat, they may together in the first instance admonish him, which yet still is but the first, and *private* admonition; which is otherwise, when others are called into assistance, who are not themselves acquainted with the offence but only by information, and joyne in it, not upon the account of their own being offended, but of being desired according unto rule to give assistance to them that are so.

Fifthly, the way and manner of the discharge of this duty is, that it be done with prudence, tenderness, and due regard unto all circumstances; whence the Apostle supposeth a spiritual *ability* to be necessary for this work, *Rom. 15. 14. Ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, so that you are able to admonish one another, especially four things are to be diligently heeded.*

First, that the whole duty be so managed,
that

that the person *offending* may be convinced, that it is done out of *love* to him and affectionate conscientious care over him, that he may take no occasion thereby for the exasperation of his own spirit.

Secondly, that the persons *admonishing* others of their offence, do make it appear that what they do is in obedience unto an institution of Christ, and therein to preserve their own souls from sin, as well as to benefit the offenders.

Thirdly, that the admonition be grounded on a rule, which alone gives it authority and efficacy.

Fourthly, that there be a readiness manifested by them, to receive satisfaction; either (1) In case that upon tryal, it appeareth the information they have had of the miscarriage whence the offence arose, was *undue*, or not well grounded; or (2) of acknowledgement and repentance.

Sixthly, The ends of this Ordinance and Institution of Christ, are,

(1.) To keep up Love without dissimulation among all the members of the Church; for if *offences* should abide unremoved, love which is the bond of perfection, would not long continue in sincerity; which tends to the dissolution of the whole society.

(2.) To

(2.) To gain the *offender*, by delivering him from the guilt of sin, that he may not lye under it, and procure the wrath of God against himself, *Levit. 19. 17.*

(3.) To preserve his person from *dishonour* and disreputation, and thereby to keep up his usefulness in the Church. To this end hath our Lord appointed the discharge of this duty in private, that the failings of men may not be unnecessarily divulged, and themselves thereby exposed unto temptation.

(4.) To preserve the Church from that *scandal* that might befall it, by the hasty opening of all the real or supposed failings of its members. And

(5.) To prevent its *trouble* in the publick hearing of things that may be otherwise healed and removed.

Seventhly, In case these ends are obtained, either by the supposed offending persons *clearing of themselves*, and manifesting themselves innocent of the crimes charged on them, as *Joshua 22. 22, 23, 24, 25. 2 Cor. 7. 11.* Or by their *acknowledgment*, repentance, and amendment, then this part of the discipline of the Church, hath, through the grace of Christ, obtained its appointed effect.

Eighthly,

Eighthly, In case the persons offending, be not humbled nor reformed, nor do give satisfaction unto them by whom they are admonished, then hath our Lord ordained a second degree of this private exercise of discipline; that the persons who being offended, have discharged the foregoing duty themselves according unto rule, shall take unto them others, two or three, as the occasion may seem to require, to joyn with them in the same work and duty, to be performed in the same manner for the same ends, with that before described, *Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17.* And it is the duty of these persons so called in for assistance,

First, To judge of the crime, fault, or offence reported to them; and not to proceed unless they finde it to consist in something expressly contrary to the rule of the Gospel, and attested in such manner, and with such evidence, as their mutual love doth require in them, with respect unto their Brethren. And they are to judge of the testimony that is given concerning the truth of the offence communicated unto them, that they may not seem either lightly to take up a report against their Brother, or to discredit the testimony of others.

Secondly, In case they finde the offence
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pretended not to be a real offence indeed contrary to the rule of the Gospel, or that it is not aright grounded, as to the evidence of it, but taken up upon prejudice, or an over-easie credulity, contrary to the law of that love which is required amongst Church-members, described 1 Cor. 13. and commanded as the great means of the edification of the Church, and preservation of its union, then to convince the *brother* offended of his mistake, and with him to satisfy the person pretended to be the offender, that no breach or *schism* may happen among the members of the same body.

Thirdly, Being satisfied of the crime and testimony, they are to associate themselves with the offended Brother in the same work and duty, that he himself had before discharged towards the offender.

Ninthly, Because there is no determination how often these *private admonitions* are to be used in case of offence, it is evident from the nature of the thing it self, that they are to be reiterated; first the one, and then the other, whilst there is any ground of hope, that the ends of them may be obtained through the blessing of Christ, the Brother gained, and the offence taken

taken away. Neither of these then is to be deserted, or laid aside, on the first, or second attempt, as though it were performed only to make way for somewhat farther; but it is to be waited on with prayer and patience, as an ordinance of Christ appointed for attaining the end aimed at.

Tenthly, In case there be not the success aimed at obtained in these several degrees of private admonition, it is then the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, that the matter be reported unto the Church, that the offender may be publicly admonished thereby, and brought to repentance; wherein is to be observed,

First, That the persons who have endeavoured in vain to reclaim their offending Brother by private admonition, are to acquaint the Elders of the Church with the case and crime: as also what they have done according to rule, for the rectifying of it; who upon that information, are obliged to communicate the knowledge of the whole matter to the Church. This is to be done by the Elders, as to whom the preservation of order in the Church, and the rule of its proceeding do belong, as we have shewed before.

Secondly, The report made to the Church
by

by the Elders is to be, (1.) Of the *crime*, guilt, or offence, (2.) Of the *Testimony* given unto the truth of it, (3.) Of the *means* used to bring the offender to acknowledgement and repentance, (4) Of his *deportment* under the private previous admonitions either as to his rejecting of them, or as to any satisfaction rendered; all in order, love, meekness, and tenderness.

Thirdly, Things being proposed unto the Church, and the offender heard upon the whole of the offence, and former proceeding, the whole Church, or multitude of the Brethren, are with the Elders to consider the nature of the offence, with the condition and temptations of the offenders, with such a spirit of meekness as our Lord Jesus Christ in his own person let them an example of, in his dealing with sinners, and which is required in them as his Disciples, *Gal. 6. 1, 2. 2 Cor. 2. 8.*

Fourthly, The Elders and Brethren are to judge of the offence, and the carriage of the offender according to rule, and if the offence be evident, and persisted in, then

Fifthly, The offender is to be *publickly admonished* by the Elders, with the consent and concurrence of the Church, *1 Thess. 5. 14. 1 Tim. 5. 20. Matth. 18. 16, 17.* And

this admonition consists of Five parts;

(1.) A declaration of the *crime* or offence, as it is evidenced unto the Church.

(2.) A conviction of the *evil* of it, from the rule, or rules transgressed against.

(3.) A declaration of the *authority* and duty of the Church in such cases.

(4.) A rebuke of the offender in the name of Christ, answering the nature and circumstances of the offence.

(5.) An Exhortation unto *humiliation* and repentance and acknowledgement.

Eleventhly, In case the offender despise this admonition of the Church, and come not upon it unto repentance, it is the will and appointment of our Lord Jesus Christ that he be *cut off* from all the Priviledges of the Church, and cast out from the society thereof, or be *excommunicated*, wherein consists the *last act* of the discipline of the Church for the correction of offenders; and herein may be considered,

First, The nature of it, that it is an *authoritative act* and so principally belongs unto the Elders of the Church, who therein exert the power that they have received from the Lord Christ, by and with the consent of the Church according to his appointment, *Matth. 16. 19. John 20. 23.*

Matth.

Matth. 18. 18. *1 Cor.* 5. 4. *Titus* 3. 10. *1 Tim.* 1. 20. *2 Cor.* 2. 6. And both these the Authority of the Eldership, and the consent of the Brethren, are necessary to the validity of the sentence, and that according to the appointment of Christ, and the practice of the first Churches.

Secondly, The effect of it, which is the cutting off, or casting out of the person offending from the communion of the Church, in the Privileges of the Gospel, as consequently from that of all the visible Churches of Christ in the earth by virtue of their communion one with another, whereby he is left unto the visible Kingdom of Satan in the World, *Matth.* 18. 17. *1 Cor.* 5. 2, 5. 13. *1 Tim.* 1. 20. *Titus* 3. 10. *Gal.* 5. 12.

Thirdly, The ends of it which are,

(1.) The gaining of the party offending, by bringing him to repentance, humiliation, and acknowledgement of his offence, *2 Cor.* 2. 6, 7. *2 Cor.* 13. 10.

(2.) The warning of others not to do so presumptuously.

(3.) The preserving of the Church in its purity and order, *1 Cor.* 5. 6, 7. all to the glory of Jesus Christ.

Fourthly, The causes of it or the grounds

and reasons on which the Church may proceed unto sentence against any offending persons. Now these are no other but such as they judge according to the Gospel, that the Lord Christ will proceed upon in his final judgement at the last day. For the Church judgeth in the name and authority of Christ, and are to exclude none from its communion, but those whom they find by the rule, that he himself excludes from his Kingdom; and so that which they bind on earth, is bound by him in Heaven, *Matth. 18. 18.* And their sentence herein is to be declared, as the declaration of the sentence which the Head of the Church, and Judge of all, will pronounce at the last day; only with this difference, that it is also made known, that this sentence of theirs, is not final or decretory, but in order to the prevention of that which will be so, unless the evil be repented of. Now although the particular evils, sins, or offences, that may render a person obnoxious unto this censure and sentence, are not to be enumerated, by reason of the variety of circumstances which change the nature of actions, yet they may in general be referred unto these heads.

First,

First, *Moral evils*, contrary to the light of nature, and expresse commands or prohibitions of the moral Law, direct rules of the Gospel, or of evil report in the world amongst men walking according to the rule and light of reason. And in cases of this nature, the Church may proceed unto the sentence whereof we speak, without previous admonition, in case the matter of fact be *notorious*, publickly and unquestionably known to be true, and no general rule (which is not to be impeached by particular instances) lye against their procedure, *1 Cor.* 5. 3 4. *2 Tim.* 3. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Secondly, Offences against that *mutual love* which is the bond of perfection in the Church, if pertinaciously persisted in, *Matth.* 18. 16, 17.

Thirdly, *False doctrines* against the fundamentals in faith or worship, especially if maintrayned with contention, to the trouble and disturbance of the peace of the Church, *Gal.* 5. 12. *Titus* 3. 9, 10, 11. *1 Tim.* 6. 3, 4, 5. *Revel.* 2. 14, 15.

Fourthly, Blasphemy, or evil speaking of the wayes and worship of God in the Church, especially if joyned with an intention to hinder the prosperity of the Church, or to expose it to persecution, *1 Tim.* 1. 20.

Fifthly, Desertion, or total causeless relinquishment of the society and communion of the Church; for such are self-condemned, having broken and renounced the covenant of God, that they made at their entrance into the Church, *Heb.* 10. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29.

Sixthly, The time or season of the putting forth the authority of Christ in the Church for this censure, is to be considered; and that is ordinarily after the admonition before described, and that with due waiting, to be regulated by a consideration of times, persons, temptations, and other circumstances. For,

(1.) The Church in proceeding to this sentence, is to express the patience and long-suffering of Christ towards offenders, and not to put it forth without conviction of a present resolved impenitency.

(2.) The event and effect of the preceding Ordinance of *admonition* is to be expected; which though not at present evident, yet like the word it self in the preaching of it, may be blessed to a good issue after many dayes.

Sixthly, The person offending, thus cut off, or cast out from the present actual communion of the Church, is still to be looked

on

on and accounted as a Brother, because of the nature of the Ordinance which is intended for his amendment and recovery, 2 Thes. 3. 15. *Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a Brother; unless he manifest his final impenitency, by blasphemy and persecution, 1 Tim. 1. 20. Whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

Seventhly, The Church is therefore still to perform the duties of love, and care, towards such persons.

(1.) In *praying* for them, that they may be converted from the error of their way, James 5. 19, 20. 1 John 5. 16. *If any man see his Brother sin a sin, which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life; for them that sin not unto death.*

(2.) In *withdrawing* from them even as to ordinary converse, for their conviction of their state and condition, 1 Cor. 5. 11. 2 Thes. 3. 14. *With such a one no not to eat.*

(3.) In *admonishing* of them, 2 Cor. 3. 15. *admonish him as a Brother; which may be done (1) Occasionally, by any Member of the Church (2) On set purpose by the consent and appointment of the whole Church; which admonition is to contain,*

(1.) A *pressing* of their sin from the rule

on the Conscience of the offender.

(2.) A *declaration* of the nature of the *censure* and *punishment* which they lye under.

(3.) A *manifestation* of the *danger* of their *impenitency*, in their being either *hardened* by the *deceitfulness* of *sin*, or *exposed* unto new *temptations* of *Sathan*.

Eighthly, In case the Lord Jesus be pleased to give a blessed effect unto this ordinance, in the repentance of the person cut off, and cast out of the Church; he is,

First, To be *forgiven* both by those who in an especial manner were offended at him, and by him, and by the whole Church, *Matth.* 18. 18. 2 *Cor.* 2. 7.

Secondly, To be *comforted* under his sorrow, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. And that by (1) The *application* of the *Promises* of the *Gospel* unto his *Conscience*, (2) A *declaration* of the *readiness* of the *Church* to receive him again into their *love* and *communion*.

Fourthly, *Restored* (1) By a *confirmation* or *testification* of the *love* of the *Church* unto him, 2 *Cor.* 2. 8. (2) A *readmission* unto the *exercise* and *enjoyment* of his former *Priviledges* in the *fellowship* of the *Church*; all with a *spirit* of *meekness*, *Gal.* 6. 1.

Quest;

Quest. 47. *The preservation of the Church in purity, order, and holiness being provided for, by what way is it to be continued and increased?*

Ans. The way appointed thereunto, is by adding such as being effectually called unto the obedience of faith, shall voluntarily offer themselves unto the society and fellowship thereof, Acts 2. 41. 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Explication.

The means appointed by our Lord Jesus Christ for the continuance and increase of the Church, are either *preparatory* unto it, or instrumentally efficient of it. The principal means subservient or preparatory unto the continuance and increase of the Church, is the *preaching of the Word* to the conviction, illumination and conversion of sinners, whereby they may be made meet to become living stones in this spiritual building, and members of the mystical body of Christ. And this is done either *ordinarily* in the Assemblies of the Church, towards such as come in unto them and attend to the Word dispensed according
to

to the appointment of Christ amongst them; 1 Cor. 14. 24. 25. *If there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest, and so falling down on his face, he will worship God; or occasionally amongst the Men of the World, Act. 8. 4.*

Secondly, The *instrumentally efficient* cause is that which is expressed in the answer, namely the *adding* in due order unto it, such as being effectually called unto the obedience of the Faith and profession of the Gospel, do *voluntarily* out of conviction of their duty, and resolution to walk in subjection to all the ordinances and commands of Christ, offer themselves to the society and fellowship thereof, whereby they may be laid in this spiritual building, as the stones were in the Temple of old, which were hewed and fitted elsewhere.

Qu. 48. *What is required of them who desire to joyn themselves unto the Church?*

Ans. (1.) That they be free from blame and offence in the World. (2) That they be instructed in the saving truths and mysteries of the Gospel. (3) Sound in the faith. (4) That the Lord having called them
them

them unto faith, repentance, and newness of life by Jesus Christ, they give up themselves to be saved by him, and to obey him in all things; and therefore (5) Are willing and ready through his grace, to walk in subjection to all his commands, and in the observation of all his laws and institutions, notwithstanding any difficulties, oppositions, or persecutions which they meet withall. (1) Phil. 1. 10. Chap. 2. 15. 1 Cor. 10. 32. 1 Theff. 2. 11, 12. Tit. 2. 10. (2) John 6. 15. Acts 26. 18. 1 Pet. 2. 9. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4, 6. (3) 1 Tim. 1. 19, 20. 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. Tit. 1. 13. Jude 3 (4) Ephes. 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. (5) 2 Cor. 8. 5.

Qⁿ. 49. What is the duty of the Elders of the Church, towards persons desiring to be admitted unto the fellowship of the Church?

Ans. (1.) To discern and judge by the rule of truth applyed in love, between sincere professors and hypocritical pretenders. (2) To instruct, direct, comfort, and encourage in the way, such as they judge to love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. (3) To propose and recommend them unto the whole Church, with prayers and supplications to God for them. (4) To admit

admit them being appozed into the order and fellowship of the Gospel in the Church. Acts 8 20, 23. Tit. I. 10. Rev. 2. 2. Jer. 15. 19. Acts 18. 26. 1 Thess 2. 7, 8, 11. Acts 9. 29, 27. Rom. 14. 1.

Q. 50. What is the duty of the whole Church in reference unto such persons?

Ans. To consider them in love and meekness, according as their condition is known, reported, or testified unto them, to appoze of, and rejoyce in the grace of God in them, and to receibe them in love without dissimulation. 1 Cor. 13.

Explication.

What in general is required unto the fitting of any persons to be members of a visible Church of Christ, was before declared, and that is, that, which the Lord Jesus hath made the indispensable condition of entring into his Kingdom, namely of being born again. *John* 3. 33. This work being secret, hidden, and invisible, the Church cannot judge of directly and in its own form or nature, but in the means, effects, and consequents of it, which are to be testified unto it concerning them who are to be admitted

mitted unto its fellowship and communion ; it is required therefore of them,

First, that they be of a conversation free from blame in the world ; for whereas one end of the gathering of Churches is to hold forth, and express the holiness of the doctrine of Christ, and the power of his grace in turning Men from all ungodliness unto sobriety, righteousness and honesty, it is required of them that are admitted into them, that they answer this end. And this the principle of grace which is communicated unto them that believe, will effect and produce. For although it doth not follow that every one who hath attained an unblameable honesty in this World, is inwardly quickened with a true principle of saving grace, yet it doth, that they who are endowed with that Principle, will be so unblameable. And although they may on other accounts be evil spoken of, yet their good conversation in Christ will justify it self.

Secondly, competent knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel, is another means whereby the great qualification inquired after is testified unto the Church. For as without this no *priviledge* of the Gospel can be profitably made use of, nor any *duty* of it be rightly performed,

so

10. *saving light* is of the essence of conversion, and doth inseparably accompany it, 2 Cor. 4. 6. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.* Where this is wanting, it is impossible for any person to evidence that he is delivered from that blindness, darkness, and ignorance, which all men are under the power of in the state of nature. Such a measure then of light and knowledge, as whereby men are enabled to apprehend aright of the person and offices of Christ, of the nature of his mediation, the benefits thereof, and the obedience that he requires at the hands of his Disciples, is expected in them who desire to be admitted into the fellowship of the Church.

Thirdly, Hereunto is to be added, *soundness* in the faith. For the *unity of faith* is the foundation of Love and all the duties thereof, which in an especial manner are to be performed towards the Church, called therefore the *house hold of Faith*. There is among the members of the Church *one faith*; Ephes. 4. 5. The common faith; the faith once delivered unto the Saints, *Jude 3.* Which is the *sound doctrine*, 1 Tim. 1. 10. Which

Which those that will not endure, must be turned from; 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. the *faithful word* that is to be held fast. *Tit.* 1. 9. 1 *Tim.* 1. 19. And which we are to be found in; *Tit.* 1. 13. Contained in a *form of sound words*, as to the profession of it, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. And this *soundness* in the unity of the faith, as it should be improved unto *oneness of mind*, and oneness of accord, in all the things of God, *Phil.* 2. 2. though it may admit of some different apprehensions in some things, wherein some may have more clear and distinct discoveries of the mind and will of God than others, which hinders not, but that all may walk according to the same rule, *Phil.* 3. 15, 16. So it is principally to be regarded in the *fundamental truths* of the Gospel, in and by the faith whereof the Church holdeth on the head Jesus Christ; *Coloss.* 2. 19. And in the *fundamental principles of Gospel worship*, the joynt celebration whereof, is the next end of gathering the Church; for without a consent of mind and accord herein, no duty can be performed unto edification, nor the peace of the Church be preserved; and these Principles are those which we have explained.

Fourthly, it is required that these things
be

be *testified* by them unto the Church, with the acknowledgement of the work of Gods grace towards them, and their resolution through the power of the same grace to cleave unto the Lord Christ with full purpose of heart, and to live in all holy obedience unto him. They come to the Church, as Disciples of Christ professing that they have learnt the truth as it is in *Jesus*, which what it inferrs, the Apostle teacheth at large; *Ephes.* 4. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. See also *Acts* 11. 23. *Acts* 8. 21, 22, 23. And this by themselves to be testified unto the Church.

First, that they may be received in love without dissimulation, as real partakers in the same faith, hope and salvation with themselves, as living members of the *mystical* body of Christ.

Secondly, That on all ensuing occasions, they may be minded of their own profession and engagements, to stir them up thereby unto faithfulness, steadfastness, and perseverance. Hereupon are the Elders of the Church to judge by the rule of truth in Love and meekness concerning their condition, and meetness to be laid as living stones in the house of God; so as that they may,

(1.) Reject

(1.) Reject false hypocritical pretenders, if in or by any means their hypocrisie be discovered unto them. *Acts* 8. 20. 23. *Titus* 1. 10. *Jer.* 15. 19.

(2.) That they may direct, and encourage in the way, such as appear to be sincere, instructing them principally in the nature of the way whereinto they are engaging, the duties, dangers, and benefits of it. *Acts* 18. 26. *Act.* 14. 22. *1 Cor.* 3. 22, 23.

(3.) To propose them, their conditions, their desires, their resolutions, unto the Church after their own expressions of them, to be considered of in love and meekness, *Acts* 9. 26, 27. Whereupon those that are approved, do give up themselves unto the Lord, to walk in the observation of all his commands and ordinances, and to the Church for the Lords sake, *2 Cor.* 8. 5. abiding in the fellowship thereof, whereunto they are admitted, *Acts* 2. 41, 42.

Quest. 51. *Wherein doth the especial form of a particular Church whereby it becomes such, and is distinguished as such from all others, consist?*

Ans. In the special consent and agreement of all the members of it, to walk together in the obserbation of the same Ordinances

dinances numerically; hence its constitution and distinction from other Churches doth proceed. Exod. 19. 5, 8. Chap. 24. 3, 7. Deut. 26. 17. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Acts 14. 23. Acts 20. 28. Heb. 13. 17.

Explication.

It hath been before declared, what especial agreement or *covenant* there ought to be among all the members of the same Church, to walk together in a due subjection unto, and observance of all the institutions of the Lord Christ. And this is that which gives it its special *form* and distinction from all other Churches. In the general nature of a Church, all Churches do agree, and equally partake. There is the same *law* of the constitution of them all; they have all the same *rule* of obedience; all the same *Head*, the same end; all carry it on by the observation of the same Ordinances in *kind*. Now besides these things which belong unto the nature of a Church in general, and wherein they all equally participate, they must also have each one its proper *difference*, that which doth distinguish it from all other Churches; and this gives it its special *form* as such. Now this cannot consist

list in any thing that is accidental, occasional, or extrinsecal unto it ; such as is *cohabitation*, (which yet the Church may have respect unto, for conveniency, and farthering of its edification) nor in any civil or *political* disposal of its members into civil societies for civil ends, which is *extrinsecal* to all its concernments as a Church ; nor doth it consist in the relation of the Church to its present Officers, which may be removed or taken away without the dissolution of the *form* or being of the Church, but it consisteth as was said in the agreement or covenant before mentioned ; For

First, This is that which constitutes them a *distinct body*, different from others ; for thereby and no otherwise do they coalesce into a society, according to the law of their constitution and appointment.

Secondly, This gives them their *especial relation* unto their own Elders, Rulers, or Guides, who watch over them as so associated by their own consent, according unto the command of Christ. And

Thirdly, From hence they have their mutual especial relation unto one another, which is the ground of the especial exercise of all Church-duties whatsoever.

Quest. 52. *Wherein consists the duty of any Church of Christ towards other Churches?*

Answ. (1) In walking circumspectly, so as to give them no offence. (2) In Prayer for their peace and prosperity. (3) In communicating supplies to their wants according to ability. (4) In receiving with love and readiness the members of them into fellowship, in the celebration of the Ordinances of the Gospel, as occasion shall be. (5) In desiring and making use of their counsel and advice in such cases of doubt, and difficulty, as may arise among them. (6) In joyning with them to express their communion in the same doctrine of faith. (1) 1 Cor. 10. 32. (2) Psal. 122. 6. Ephes. 6. 18. 1 Tim. 2. 1. (3) 2 Cor. 8. 4, 6. Acts 11. 29, 30. Rom. 15. 26, 27. (4) Rom. 16. 1, 2. 3 Ep. Job. 8, 9. (5) Acts 15. 2. (6) 1 Tim. 3. 15.

Explication.

Churches being gathered and settled according to the minde of Christ, ought to preserve a mutual holy communion among themselves, and to exercise it, in the discharge of those duties whereby their mutual

tual good and edification may be promoted. For whereas they are all united under *one Head* the Lord Christ, *Ephes. 1. 22, 23.* in the *same faith* and order, *Ephes. 4. 5.* And do walk by the *same rule*, they stand in such a relation one to another, as is the ground of the communion spoken of. Now the principal wayes, whereby they exercise this communion, are the acts and *duties* enumerated in the answer unto this Question; as,

First, Carefull walking so as to give no offence unto one another; which although it be a *moral duty* in reference unto all, yet therein especial regard is to be had unto other Churches of Christ, that they be not in any thing grieved or tempted, *1 Cor. 10. 32. Give none offence; neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God.*

Secondly, In constant prayer for the peace, welfare, edification and prosperity one of another, *Rom. 1. 9. Coloss. 1. 9. Eph. 6. 18.* And this because of the special concernment of the name and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, in their welfare.

Thirdly, In communicating of supplies for their relief according unto their ability, in case of the outward wants, straits, dangers,

gers, or necessities of any of them, *Acts* 11. 29, 30. *Rom.* 15. 26, 27. *2 Cor.* 8. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 14.

Fourthly, The receiving of the members of other Churches to communion, in the celebration of Church-Ordinances, is another way whereby this communion of Churches is exercised, *Rom.* 16. 1, 2. *3 Ep.* 7. 8. 9. For whereas the personal right of such persons unto the Ordinances of the Church, and their orderly walking in the observation of the commands of Christ, are known by the testimony of the Church whereof they are members, they may without farther enquiry or satisfaction given, be looked on *pro tempore* as members of the Church wherein they desire fellowship, and participation of the Ordinances of Christ.

Fifthly, In desiring or making use of the counsel and advice of one another, in such cases of doubt and difficulty, whether *doctrinal*, or *practical*, as may arise in any of them, *Acts* 15. 2, 6. And from hence it follows, that in case any Church either by error in doctrine, or precipitation, or mistake in other administrations, do give offence unto other Churches, those other churches may require an account from them, admonish them of their faults, and withhold

hold communion from them, in case they persist in the error of their way; and that because *in* their difficulties, and *before* their miscarriages, they were bound to have desired the advice, counsel and assistance of those other Churches, which being neglected by them, the other are to recover the end of it unto their utmost ability; *Gal. 2. 6. 11.* And hence also it follows, that those that are *rightly* and *justly* censured in any Church, ought to be rejected by all Churches whatever; both because of their mutual communion, and because it is, and ought to be presumed, untill the contrary be made to appear, that in case there had been any difficulty, or doubt in the procedure of the Church, they would have taken the advice of those Churches, with whom they were obliged to consult.

Lastly, Whereas the Churches have all of them one *common faith*, and are all obliged to *hold forth* and declare it to all men as they have opportunity, *1 Tim. 3. 15.* to testify this their mutual communion, their interest in the same faith and hope, for the more open declaration and proposition of the truths of the Gospel which they profess, and for the vindication both of the truth, and themselves, from false charges
and

and imputations, they may, and if God give opportunity, *ought* to joyn together in declaring and testifying their joynt consent and fellowship in the same doctrine of Faith, expressed in a form of sound words.

Quest. 53. *What are the ends of all this Dispensation and order of things in the Church?*

Ans^w. The glory of God, the honour of Jesus Christ the Mediator, the fartherance of the Gospel, the edification and consolation of Believers here; with their eternal salvation hereafter. Rev. 4. 9, 10, 11. Chap. 5. 12, 13. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13.



FINIS.
